

AUSTRALIAN Natural Health

February-March 2016
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Ash Hart

*How self-love
changed her life*

WHAT'S
HOLDING
YOU BACK?

SUCCESS THROUGH
INNER LISTENING

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OUT
YOGA

BEAT THE HEAT
WITH AYURVEDA

*Safer
Sunscreens*

SAVE YOUR SKIN

JUICE BUSTERS

HABITS FOR HEALTHIER JUICING

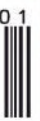
**Xavier
Rudd**

"WELLNESS HAS
ALWAYS BEEN A
MOVEMENT."

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YOUR LOOK
AND YOUR
LIFE

VOLUME 16 No. 1

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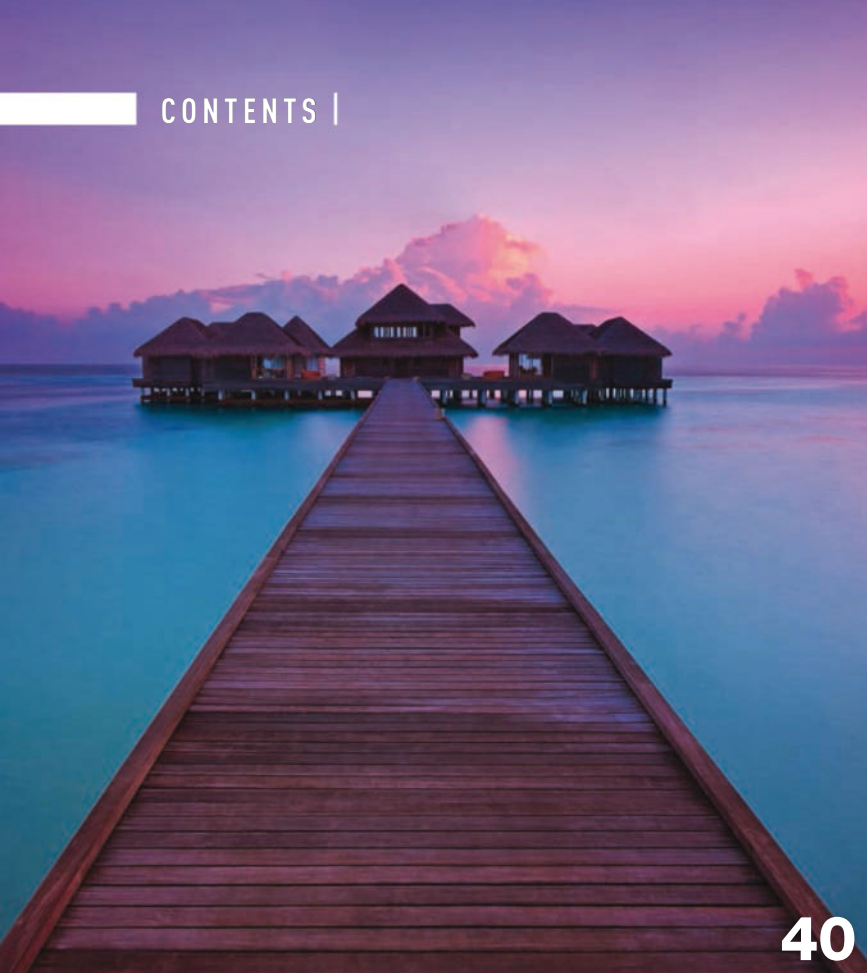
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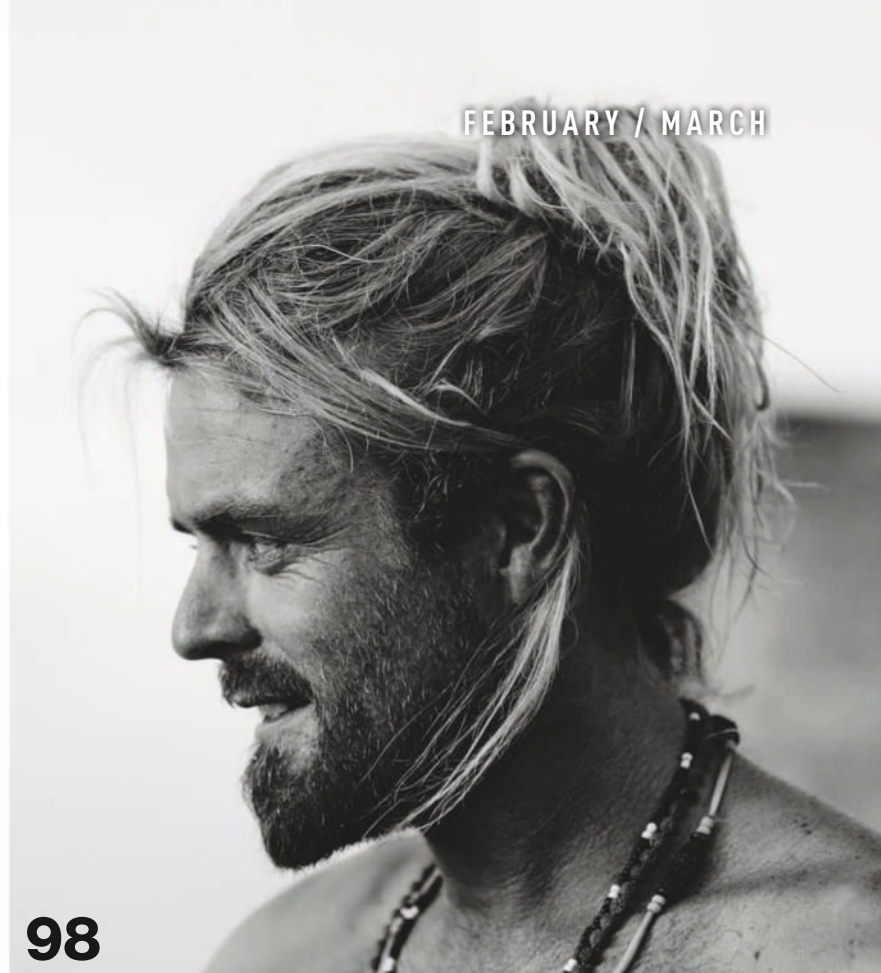
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Download the free App from:



WHAT'S ON

THE NATURAL & ORGANIC SUPERSHOW:

Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, 12-14 March

Australia's most loved and knowledgeable food, health and wellness professionals will unite for one deliciously healthy weekend. Discover the best Paleo, certified organic, vegan, vegetarian, free-froms, natural nutrition and allergy-friendly products for your pantry and try before you buy! See live demonstrations from Pete Evans and Teresa Cutter and learn how to live your healthiest life the natural way with seminars with health and wellness professionals.

thesupershow.com.au

WANDERLUST THREDBO: Thredbo Alpine Village, 18-21 February

Open your mind, free your soul and move your body at Wanderlust. The festival brings together a remarkable group of yoga and meditation instructors, speakers, artists and chefs for a transformational retreat in awe-inspiring natural beauty. Also featuring a wonderful line-up of musicians including award-winning Australian artist Xavier Rudd and his new collective, The United Nations.

wanderlust.com

THE REAL FOOD REVOLUTION: Throughout February and March – Melbourne, Perth, Cairns

A festival for health-food lovers who want to discover the truths around real food and understand the fundamentals of how food can be your natural alternative medicine for longevity of life, increased energy levels and a more confident body. Kick-start your health and wellness journey and be your healthiest you! Includes education on clothing, crystals, body treatments and more.

therealfoodrevolution.com.au

In this issue...

The beginning of the year has this wonderful, fresh feeling. I'd liken it to putting just-laundered linen on your bed: although it is still your bed, it feels new again and part of you is excited about slipping between those crisp, clean-scented covers. Instead of crawling into bed at night to doze listlessly, you flop down with a happy hurrumph and relish the plumpness of your pillows and the comforting weight of your duvet.

It's possible that not everyone shares my fondness for fresh sheets. But you might be surprised at how even the littlest changes can make a big difference in our lives.

I learnt from yogi Linda Novosad (page 92) that Ayurveda teaches us that we should make changes with the seasons in order to strike balance between our doshas. If we don't make these changes we exist in a state of imbalance that, in turn, has a negative effect on both our physical health and the health of our mind and soul. Although I am new to Ayurveda, its message is familiar: if we live our lives constantly as we have always lived them, we limit ourselves and, of course, our wellness.

Ash Hart, our inspiring cover model (page 22), changed her life when she discovered that yoga practice and meditation could heal the doubt and anxiety she felt when she entered the modelling industry. And award-winning artist Xavier Rudd (page 98) chose to become vegetarian while on a tour of the USA. These are big changes, but, as we mentioned earlier, even little ones can make a big difference. This year, you might consider changing your hairstyle or colour (and you'll find some expert tips on page 58), or you might commit to finding a weight loss diet that you'll stick to (inspiration on page 28), or maybe you'll book a holiday to a destination you've never thought of travelling to before (and chances are you'll love it as much as Miranda Luby did, see page 86). These things might often seem insignificant, but all of them – like clean sheets to a bed – can make something (life) that is tired, uninspired or even forgotten seem new and exciting again.

This very magazine, as a new editor, has been the most exciting change I could imagine. Like with anything new, there was plenty of fear and self-doubt when it all began, but I'm lucky that Australian Natural Health is blessed with the best kind of people: the kind who love and embrace change, as Ayurveda does and as we all can in 2016.

Maddie Lakos.

Editor, Australian Natural Health



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instagram.com/naturalhealth_mag/

OUR EXPERTS |



Naturopath, nutritionist, author and TV personality Janella Purcell works with people with all manner of health issues to help them achieve optimum health, naturally. She is a fountain of knowledge for our readers.

janellapurcell.com

Lisa O'Neill is a health and lifestyle journalist, triathlete and mum who is passionate about fitness, nutrition and mental wellbeing. Chasing after a busy two-year-old has added new meaning to a balanced lifestyle and has opened her eyes to the beauty of everyday moments.



Kate Toholka is a success coach, best-selling author and creator of The Happiness Hub. After becoming disillusioned working in the mental health industry, she sought to use her passions for holistic living and psychology to empower women to live their dream lives. She believes in the power of community, self-love, inspired action, the natural order and phenomenal self-worth.

katetoholka.com

Sally O'Neil is a writer, population health specialist and self-confessed fitness and food junkie. Otherwise known as The Fit Foodie, she is on a mission to prove healthy and nutritious doesn't have to be boring – and that even while staying in shape, you can have your cake and eat it too.

the-fit-foodie.com

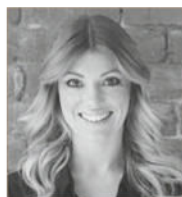


Shannon Dunn is a wellness writer, eco beauty editor and holistic healer specialising in EFT, Reiki and Psych-K. A journalist for two decades, she has worked for some of the world's leading media companies in Australia, New Zealand and the United States. She now lives in Auckland, New Zealand, where she runs her Australasian editorial and conscious media relations company, Communeco.

ecobeautyeditor.com

Kemi Nekvapil has been in the wellbeing space for more than 20 years and is a leading authority on all things raw beauty. She is passionate about supporting women to be kinder to themselves and each other, and provides coaching, retreats and events to help them learn how to nourish themselves, and their lives, without guilt or apology.

keminekvapil.com



Nat Kringoudis is a doctor in Chinese medicine, acupuncturist, author, speaker and all-round natural fertility expert. She's also the founder of Melbourne women's health clinic The Pagoda Tree, and producer of HealthTalks TV. Her mission is to educate and empower women to take control of their hormone health.

natkringoudis.com.au

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SMOOTH MOVE

Smoothie lovers of South Australia, meet Combi Café: a bright-coloured and health food-focused venue that lovingly blends organic ingredients into slurp-able concoctions and serves up nourishing food that even the most health-conscious eater will love. After road-testing the Combi way of life on Melburnians, a second café opened on Leigh Street, Adelaide, late last year and has been churning out cold-pressed juices, raw-inspired eats and vegan goodies ever since. #YUM

Picture by Jasmine Blom. 17 Leigh Street, Adelaide wearecombi.com.au



Beach vibes

WISH YOU WERE SITTING BY THE SEA WITH A FRESH COCONUT IN HAND AND THE SMELL OF TROPICAL FRUIT IN THE AIR? YEP, SO DO WE. BUT SINCE WE CAN'T ALWAYS BE ON HOLIDAYS, WE GET OUR TROPICAL KICKS FROM DELICIOUS, LOW-KILOJOULE ORGANIC KING COCONUT WATER WITH GUAVA FROM THE COCONUT COLLECTIVE. FIND THEM AT LOCAL HEALTH FOOD SHOPS. thecoconutcollective.co



#RESOLUTION MINDLESSNESS

Good, old-fashioned reverie is making a comeback. In their new book, *The Power of Negative Emotions*, positive psychologists Dr Robert Biswas-Diener and Dr Todd Kashdan say that, "Mindfulness can take us far, but cannot take us all the way...sometimes, [it] can even hold us back." Their theory is that mindlessness helps us make better decisions because we rely on automatic processing and instinct. And, that by being mindful of anything and everything, we are cluttering the path of our intuition.

SUNNY-SIDE UP

Take advantage of warmer weather and move your yoga practice outdoors (and up high) with rooftop yoga sessions everywhere:

PERTH: Northbridge Yoga runs yoga sessions in the plexi-grassed splendour of a rooftop car park from December 2015 until March 2016. Book online at rooftop-yoga.com.au

MELBOURNE: The Yoga Place in West Melbourne holds special rooftop sessions from September to April (weather permitting). These fill up quickly so watch their Facebook page for details and book online at theyogaplace.com.au

SYDNEY: Yoga by the Sea runs invigorating seaside classes all year round at the Bondi Icebergs at Bondi Beach. Book online at yogabythesea.com.au



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3 Bohemia – One Seed Amber,

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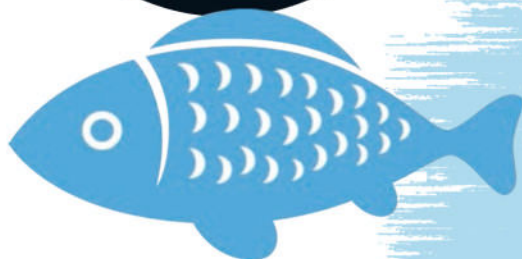
2 Hawaiian Flower Lei Purfume

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SEA STYLING

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KEEP THE WINDOWS TO YOUR SOUL BRIGHT AND CLEAR BY EATING FISH, SAYS PERSONALEYES OPTOMETRIST ANNA SUI (PERSONALEYES.COM.AU). "INCLUDING PLENTY OF OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS IN YOUR DIET BY EATING OILY FISH LIKE SALMON, SARDINES AND MACKEREL IS A GREAT WAY TO REDUCE EYE INFLAMMATION AND SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF DRY EYES," SAYS SUI. "FISH OIL HELPS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR TEARS, EASING DRY EYE." VEGETARIAN ALTERNATIVES INCLUDE FLAXSEED OR CHIA OIL.

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SIP AND GLOW

Collagen is a protein that acts as the glue that holds our bodies together. Collagen is the second most abundant substance in our body behind water and is the building block of our tissues. Collagen makes up 75% of our skin, over 90% of our ligaments and tendons and 35% of our bones. Other structures that are primarily made of collagen are our hair, nails and cartilage.

In our mid-twenties our collagen production begins to decrease at a rate of 2% a year, by our 50's we've lost over half the amount of collagen in our bodies, and the natural production ceases altogether. This is what is known as the ageing process, and is most noticeable in our skin, hair and joints, whether it's wrinkles, sagging skin, finer hair, joint pain or joint degeneration.

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RECIPE RECOMMENDATION



RADIANT SKIN SMOOTHIE

1 cup of milk of your choice
(almond, coconut, soy, milk)

1 serving of Vida Glow

1 banana, sliced

1 cup of fresh spinach

1 tbsp ground flaxseed

1/4 cup of (greek yoghurt
or avocado)

2 teaspoons of honey



Dish de-stress

Struggling to find a way to chill out? Try doing the dishes. A recent study published in *Mindfulness* journal found that washing up can be used as an informal contemplative practice that promotes a positive stage of mindfulness, i.e. feeling pretty relaxed.

Try it: When you clean, focus on the smell of the soap, the warmth of the water and the feel of the dishes. This resulted in a decrease in nervousness by 27 per cent, and an increase in inspiration by 25 per cent.

SELF MASSAGE

There's no better feeling than having a trained hand kneading out those tight spots. But if you're too cash and time poor to visit whenever you get a nigggle, you can DIY. "If you have a sharp pain, like a knot, use a spiky ball," says physiotherapist Alex Lakos (sboydpt.com.au). "Spiky balls are used to release trigger points within the muscle belly – when you put pressure on a knot it will hurt a little, but eventually release. But massage should never be so painful that you can't tolerate it, so use less pressure if needed."



Lean on me

With Davina Kruse of Byron Yoga Centre

Sometimes we need a little support from our friends. There are certain yoga poses, like balancing on one leg, that demonstrate the usefulness of support. Balances like utthita hasta padangusthasana strengthen the legs and promote balance in the body, mind and emotions. Practising this balancing asana with a friend will help you to hold the pose for longer but most importantly it will make it more fun! Taking this principle off the mat: don't be afraid to ask for support – often when a friend supports us, it is mutually beneficial and works both ways!

www.byronyoga.com

GREEN goodness

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Clean and easy

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New to the Lotus range is our Matcha, Baobab and Acai superfood powders. All certified organic and gluten free, these powders are the perfect addition to smoothies or baking and cooking recipes.

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DAIRY FREE



VEGAN



NUT FREE

Lotus Acai Protein Smoothie

Serves 2

Ingredients:

- 1 frozen banana
- 1 ½ cups fresh or frozen strawberries
- ¼ cup fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1 tbsp Lotus Organic Matcha Powder
- 1 tbsp Lotus Organic Baobab Powder
- 1-2 tsp Lotus LSA Meal
- 1 tbsp Lotus Organic Acai Powder
- ¼ cup coconut water
- ¼-½ cup vanilla almond milk
- Top with Lotus Black Chia and fresh berries

Method:

In a high powered blender, add all of the ingredients, excluding the toppings. Blend on high for 1 minute until smooth. Pour in to a glass and top with Lotus Black Chia and fresh berries.



My refresh lust list



1. **Butcher Baker Candle Co**
Bring the sweet smell of pomegranate into your home with this locally made soy candle.
Small, \$20, butcherbakercandleco.com
2. **Handsome Devils Co Coconut Body Scrub**
Do you like your boys buffed? Give the gift of coconut exfoliation goodness to your favourite beau with this (sufficiently masculine and totally natural) scrub, **\$22.50 at handsomedevilsco.com.au**
3. **Made Cold-Pressed Juices**
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Staycation inspiration

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Enjoy the outdoors in style with this beautiful picnic rug from Mozi, \$69.95 at mozi.com.au



RUNNING FREE

If taking a dip in Sydney's Harbour Foreshore in nothing but your birthday suit is on your bucket list, now is your chance to live out your dreams. The Sydney Skinny has been described as a life-affirming and uplifting celebration of positive body image, self-acceptance and personal achievement – plus it's a wonderful excuse to swim starters in the ocean. #blessed. The 2016 event will be held on 28 February. For tickets and info visit thesydneyskinny.com.au

SWITCHING OFF



If you think phone FOMO (that is, Fear Of Missing Out on a single notification, text or Instagram opportunity) is messing with your day-to-day mindfulness, chances are you're not alone. Recent surveys by Pew Internet Research found that 67 per cent of people find themselves checking their phones for messages or calls, even if they don't hear their phone vibrating or ringing, and 44 per cent say they slept with their phone or tablet next to their bed for fear of missing notifications and calls. Even without our eyes on our phones, we're subconsciously plugged in, signed in and hardwired for commenting, liking, posting and sharing. "We are programmed to be available – to our jobs, our friends and our families – and often feel a heightened sense of responsibility as a result," says Lesley

Seeger, staff therapist at Northwestern University. "This stems from the fact that we think we'll be seen as a weak communicator if we don't respond right away, or that we lack commitment, and so it becomes hard to just turn off our phones."

Learning to switch off isn't easy, but it's worth it. Seeger says, "When you feel yourself wondering about what's happening at home or at work, acknowledge those feelings and thoughts, then let them go and bring yourself back. Pay attention to the sights, sounds and activities around you – take advantage of the moment that you're in."

Lust go: Alila Anji

Plans to travel to China usually include traversing the Great Wall, eating Szechuan cuisine and, perhaps, visiting the crowded capital of Beijing. But if you prefer to stray from the tourist trail, you can add Zhejiang province – accessible from China's southern hub Shanghai – to your list. Opening in 2016, Alila Anji is a luxury retreat nestled amid 60,000 hectares of bamboo groves. With most rooms offering stunning views of Fushi Lake, you'd be hard pressed not to feel relaxed here – but if you need a little extra help, there's always Spa Alila. For more information visit alilahotels.com/anji



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HANGING IN THE balance

MAKING WELLNESS A PRIORITY WAS A REVELATION FOR ASH HART. NOW THE MODEL AND YOGA TEACHER SEEKS TO SHARE HER LOVE OF THE BALANCED LIFE WITH THE WORLD. MADDIE LAKOS WRITES.

Young, glamorous and charismatic as she may be, Ash Hart has a naturally grounded, almost calming, demeanour. The model and her gap-toothed older sister Jessica, who some may recognise from the Victoria's Secret runway, have been called the quintessence of Aussie beauty – but in spite of her celebrity status, Hart chooses to remain decidedly down to earth. “For me, health and happiness is all about being myself and sharing this with the world based on yoga, meditation, consciousness and being healthy,” says Hart. “And by helping others to discover the power in this too.”

After entering the modelling industry at 15 years old, Hart found herself searching for ways to overcome the pressure to be ‘perfect’. “I have always been a real earth baby and a tomboy,” she says. “But as I grew up and entered the modelling industry, I became self-conscious and self-doubting, which in turn made me really unhappy and anxious.”

Hart was just 17 and living in Germany with “too much time to herself” when yoga

practice became her support. “That was a rough patch for me,” she says. “But when I began practising yoga and meditation, I started to remember who I was and came back to centre.” It began with Bikram, Hart says, because she loved the intensity, the challenge and the hard-core workout. But from this body-centred practice Hart was drawn to the spirituality and focus that yoga brings. “It was then that I became really aware of the importance of mind and spiritual health, and this realisation changed everything.”

Hart, now a qualified yoga instructor, has ditched the pursuit of perfection for one of inner peace and self-love. “One of the things I love most about yoga is that it is a constant learning – that’s why it’s a daily practice,” she says. “You can never master it or beat it, instead you are going further into poses, and learning new ones, challenging your mind and learning more about your body every day.”

“Yoga,” she continues. “Constantly reminds us that we’re imperfect, and to me, that’s perfect.”

THE HART OF SELF-LOVE

It is something, in an era of selfies and social media shirk, to rise above it all and remain true to you. And this is possibly most true for the fashion and modelling industries. "Modelling does put on a lot of pressure to look and be a certain way," says Hart. "The industry is known for not having the healthiest habits and, sure, in the past I've wanted to change things about myself... have bigger boobs and be skinnier and have longer legs. We all have these issues, but I was born the way I am and I want to stay true to that, which is why I work on self-acceptance and self-love daily."

Although Bikram was where it all began, Hart no longer uses yoga as a workout, but instead focuses on a practice that fosters these feelings of self-acceptance and self-love. "I get more out of the practice when I am breathing and sitting with my feelings and the sensations in my body rather than sweating and pushing myself too far," she says. "Practising is so important to me because I wake up each day and look forward to it; I find it really relaxing and enjoyable. I look forward to just having that peace of mind, stretching and strengthening my body, feeling strong but calm, with a conscious attitude."

Hart also meditates twice a day – as a rule. A practice she says helps her maintain her energy, vitality and calm, even when her schedule is bursting. "By being so disciplined with my meditation practice, I am ensuring my wellbeing is my number-one priority, and that doesn't change no matter where I am in the world," she says. "It's the constant thing in my life no matter where I am or who I'm with."

LIVING WELL

For all its shortcomings, Hart also credits modelling and her working life for the motivation to stay calm, fit and healthy. "It's actually not that hard for me," she says. "Not only do I do it for myself but I do it for my work too, because when I am fit, and healthy, and happy, I am in the best shape physically and mentally for the job at hand."

Hart, who is currently an ambassador for health and wellness company Swisse, believes this is especially pertinent when it comes to fuelling your body. "I've also learnt over time that you can't be balanced when you are restricting yourself from certain things or cutting things out all together," she says. In the new year it can become too easy to jump on a diet bandwagon in a bid to get in shape, fast – an idea that's often sold through the glamorous and the model-thin. However, in alignment with Swisse's values on health and happiness, Hart champions balance. "I have been through different

health fads, and diets, and I was vegan for a long time," she says. "You can definitely see some benefits, but nothing compares to an all-round balanced approach, and since I have started eating meats again and including things like butter and lots of healthy fats back into my diet, I have had the most amazing energy."

"Not only do I do it for myself but I do it for my work too, because when I am fit, and healthy, and happy, I am in the best shape physically and mentally for the job at hand."

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

With both Hart sisters pursuing a career in modelling, one would expect some sort of sibling rivalry. But Ash can't think of anything better than having someone to look up to. "She's so inspiring and I'm beyond proud of her," she says of big sister Jessica. "She has also taught me so much about the modelling industry, and she's a real go-getter; nothing just happened for her but she took it all in her stride and from there she has made her dreams reality – including launching her own make-up brand LUMA, and becoming a Victoria's Secret Angel."

But although their careers are connected, there is more to the Hart girls than just modelling. Ash says, "As sisters, it's an unspoken agreement between us that we are unconditionally there for each other, always."

"That would be the ultimate best thing for me about having a sister. We're really honest with each other and you can totally respect the honesty because you know it comes from a place of love and goodness, and wanting the best for each other."

But there are many good things about having a sister who is a Victoria's Secret model, not the least of which is swapping clothing. "[Jess] has the most ridiculous wardrobe and she's really generous with her stuff – that's definitely a major perk of being the 'little sister' and having a big sister who is an international supermodel!"



being ASH HART...

HER NATURAL BEAUTY ROUTINE:

Look after your body from the inside out. This means eating nutritious food and drinking lots of water. I find that if you look after your inner health, it will show on the outside. I remove my make-up with gentle micellar water, apply a really thick moisturiser, and apply oil to the ends of my hair.

HER HANDBAG ESSENTIALS:

I always have my sunglasses, Swisse Deep Sea Hydrating Mist Toner, LUMA lip gloss and a piece of fruit or a small bag of nuts. I try to keep my handbag light – it's not a second suitcase. I feel happier when I am just carrying the essentials.

HER FAVOURITE THING ABOUT SUMMER:

I'd have to say it's the incredible in-season fresh produce. Summer is insane for delicious, nutritious goodness: berries, cherries, grapes, grapefruit, melons, and nectarines...I get excited just thinking about it all. Also, tomatoes...

HER PERSONAL MANTRA:

My mantra changes with me, but they always have a similar vibe: don't be afraid, be mindful and present, and don't try to be perfect. Also: be ok when things go wrong or don't turn out the way you'd planned – take a moment to process it and understand how you are feeling, and then keep moving forward.

HER ULTIMATE INDULGENCE:

My husband's parents are in the south of France, and every time we go to visit them the entire experience is pure indulgence. The setting, the wine, the breads, everything – it's incredible. The key to indulgence is to not feel guilty. It wouldn't be the ultimate indulgence if it were part of your normal routine. Be present and conscious of the experience and just enjoy it – we all need to indulge every once in a while. There is also something really beautiful about coming home after a big day, and enjoying a glass of wine with my husband.

HER YOGA STYLE:

My favourite style is vinyasa; I love the flow, linking your body movement to your breathing. It's so smooth, almost like a dance. The benefits of this, especially of the slow, steady and purposeful breathing, are too many to list. **NH**



A tropical super-fruit

Dragon fruit is making its way onto our must-try summer fruit list for its impressive nutritional profile and subtle fresh flavour. SALLY O'NEIL tells us why she'll be keeping a few in the fruit bowl – and it's not just because they look amazing.

Sally O'Neil
the-fit-foodie.com



BACKGROUND

Dragon fruit, also known as pitaya or pitahaya, is unique in both its appearance and its nutrition. The fruit has an intense colour (usually bright pink and green, although some species present with a deep red or yellow appearance) and shape not unlike custard apple – but much prettier. The centre of the fruit is made up of a red or white pulp, which can be either sweet or sour depending on the species. Despite its tropical aesthetic, the flesh has a mild taste with a melon-like texture and crunchy seeds like the kiwifruit.

Native to Mexico and Central America, dragon fruit is best grown in tropical climates and is now cultivated across Asia and in Australia (Northern Territory and some parts of Queensland). The fruit is grown on cactus-like trees that bear white flowers that only open for one night and then close. It usually takes around 30 to 50 days for the fruit to develop after flowering, but fortunately the trees can flower up to six times a year, meaning there is almost always fresh dragon fruit.

The red-fleshed varieties contain lycopene, which is a natural antioxidant known to fight cancer, heart disease, and lower blood pressure.

BENEFITS

General health: Dragon fruit has a surprising number of phytonutrients, which can help prevent disease and help you maintain optimal health. They are also rich in antioxidants and polyunsaturated (good) fatty acids, as well as vitamin C, several B vitamins, carotene and protein.

Satiety: Dragon fruit, like many fruits, has a significant fibre content. This can help keep the body satiated by slowing digestion (an effect of soluble fibre). Increased fibre intake also helps to improve the body's bowel movements by facilitating the passage through the digestive tract (an effect of insoluble fibre), and help reduce the chances of conditions like constipation and irritable bowel syndrome.

Detox: Dragon fruit can assist the body with normal functions such as the flushing of toxins and waste from the bowels, also a function



of fibre. And, according to a study in *Food Chemistry* journal, dragon fruit is also a great source of prebiotics – essential to the growth of good bacteria (probiotics) in the gut.

Immunity: The high quantities of vitamin C in this fruit work to strengthen your immune system, enabling your body to fight off infections more efficiently each day.

Heart health: Dragon fruit can help boost your heart health by improving good cholesterol levels. A 2010 study published in the journal *Pharmacognosy Research* found that dragon fruit consumption could help lower the risks of developing heart disease and high blood pressure. This exotic fruit is also a unique source of monounsaturated fats, helping to maintain good heart health.

Anti-ageing: By fighting off free radicals – atoms that can cause disruptions in cells – increased antioxidant intake can help keep the skin firm and youthful. In addition, the fruit contains phosphorus, essential for growing and repairing tissue.

SOURCES AND DOSAGE

The great news is you can choose to be liberal with your consumption of this

TOP TIPS

Choose a bright red or pink dragon fruit that is fully ripe. Assess by pressing the flesh to find one with a little softness. Dragon fruits are best served chilled and sliced into cubes or they can be blended into a delicious smoothie. Dragon fruit sorbet can be made by simply blending frozen cubes – add a little fresh mint for a delicious summer dessert.

The high amount of antioxidants and nutrients in dragon fruit may make it suitable as a moisturiser for sunburnt skin. Combine the flesh with cucumber juice and honey to cool the affected area.

delicious fruit. One fruit weighing 200 grams contains just 60 calories. With such a low energy density, it's a great food for anyone looking to control their weight. Find it at your local market, grocery store or specialty grocer. **NH**

Disclaimer: Dragon fruit can be enjoyed by everyone and has no known health risks associated with it. Studies have proven that pregnant and breastfeeding women may eat dragon fruit without any health issues, reactions or risks. As with any food, dragon fruit should be enjoyed in moderation as a high level of fibre may result in digestive discomfort.

THE *Weight Loss* WEIGH-UP



PHOTO: CREDIT

Dieting can be dull, but when it comes to shedding those seasonal kilos, a personal approach can make all the difference. Find out what works and what doesn't with naturopath JULIA D'ANGELO.

Choosing the right approach to weight loss can be just as tricky as the weight loss process itself. When you have kilos to shed, there is no shortage of diets to try, but with endless options on the market, each claiming to be the best (and often easiest) way to get the results you want, confusion is inevitable. This guesswork around popular diets means many people fall off the bandwagon before they even start, opting for programs that are too out of step with their lifestyle and personal preferences, or too extreme to be sustainable. Evolution has ensured that weight loss isn't easy, so any diet that promises rapid results usually also results in a rapid flop (and hence the term 'crash dieting'). But at its core, the premise is simple: eat fewer calories than you put in. Yes, when it comes to moving kilos, you will have to make sacrifices, and often even the best diet will require hard work, dedication and consistency. When it comes to choosing a weight loss approach, above all else, it must be conducive with your lifestyle. Otherwise, sticking to your plan is impossible and success will be out of reach. Adopt a system that you can see yourself sticking with long term and that will nourish your body, not deprive it. By looking past the marketing hype and knowing the facts, it is possible to choose a regime that will work for you. We've narrowed your options down to some of the most scientifically scrutinised weight management methods – take your educated pick.

The ketogenic diet (high protein, very low carbohydrate)

WHAT IS IT?

Ketogenic dieting has gained great popularity in recent years, some would say due to the heavy marketing of several versions of high-protein and low-carbohydrate diets that promote rapid results – think Atkins and the Zone diet. In many of these regimes, the core principles remain the same, specifically a reduced carbohydrate intake – usually to less than 50 grams per day, miniscule compared to the average intake of 310 g, according to the Dietitians Association of Australia – and a relative increase in proportions of protein and fat.

This dietary approach depletes the body's glucose reserve (a primary source of energy), meaning that the body is 'forced' to seek an alternative energy

source. This is found in the form of ketone bodies, which are, essentially, made from the body's fat stores. In effect, the body burns fat to produce energy in place of carbohydrates. It usually takes three to four days of minimal carbohydrate consumption before this process begins.

BENEFITS:

Ketogenic diets are not only an effective way of losing weight, they generally have the favourable effect on altering one's body composition, reducing body fat while preserving lean muscle mass, important for maintaining metabolism (the amount of energy you burn at rest) and muscle strength and definition. This is due to an increase in protein consumption that, in turn, also provides a greater feeling of fullness, or satisfaction, and reduces feelings of hunger. The ketogenic diet is proven to be effective in reducing blood pressure and improving blood sugar and insulin imbalances. Other conditions that may benefit from this diet include type 2 diabetes, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), fatty liver disease, epilepsy and gastro-oesophageal reflux disorder (GORD).

When it comes to choosing a weight loss approach, above all else, it must be conducive with your lifestyle.

LIMITATIONS:

As the ketogenic diet is restrictive, it is more effective over shorter time periods and is largely not sustainable for more than six months. In the avoidance of carbohydrates, ketogenic dieting also results in the avoidance of nutritious foods such as grains, dairy, and starchy fruit and vegetables, which can result in malnutrition and constipation.

Low-fat diets

WHAT IS IT?

While health authorities often recommend low-fat diets as a means for weight management, they were traditionally used to treat cholesterol imbalances and to reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Specifically, the goal of low-fat diets is to increase or prevent decreases in high-density lipoprotein (HDL cholesterol),





*Periodic fasting
has been practised
by various cultures
and religions
throughout history*

or good cholesterol, while also reducing low-density lipoprotein (LDL cholesterol) and triglycerides, which are fat (lipid) molecules that increase risk of heart disease and stroke.

Low-fat diets involve reducing your consumption of meat, eggs, full-fat dairy products and oils, which can contain high amounts of dietary fat. Alternatively, consumption of grains, legumes, reduced-fat dairy products, fruit and vegetables is encouraged. In this diet, the primary energy source is carbohydrates.

BENEFITS:

Studies have shown that low fat-diets reduce total cholesterol levels (the combination of LDL, HDL, triglycerides and other lipid components) in addition to specifically lowering LDL cholesterol. A low-fat diet combined with a caloric deficit is a great way to lose weight and manage cholesterol.

LIMITATIONS:

The prevalence of low-fat foods has left room for error when it comes to low-fat dieting, so without the elimination of processed foods (that may be high in simple carbohydrates and sugar), it is possible that a low-fat diet can do more harm than good. Long-term studies have shown that heart disease and obesity are more common among individuals who eat a low-fat and high-carbohydrate diet, and further studies have shown that diets that contain moderate amounts of good fat are more likely to reduce triglyceride levels and preserve HDL cholesterol levels.

Intermittent fasting

WHAT IS IT?

Periodic fasting has been practised by various cultures and religions throughout history, but was pushed to the fore of the diet world with the release of Dr Michael Mosley's highly publicised program The Fast Diet, also known as the 5:2 diet. Intermittent fasting involves the voluntary abstinence from food and drink and is available in a variety of fasting forms and practices, the most common being 'modified

fasting', which involves alternating fasting days with eating days, and 'time-restricted feeding' allows an individual to limit their eating to within a specific timeframe, such as between the hours of 12pm to 7pm. This protocol induces fasting periods on a routine basis. The former is the foundation of the 5:2 diet, which recommends two days a week of 'fasting' – allowing a caloric intake of only 600 calories for men and 500 for women – and five days of normal eating (2000 calories per day for women and 2400 for men). Ideally, the two fasted days do not fall together.

Intermittent fasting regimes aim to decrease overall energy intake, leading to weight loss. Additionally, it is thought that the time of day plays an important role in the body's metabolic and physiological function (circadian biology) and that – by limiting food consumption to daytime – the body's sleeping patterns, hormones, physiologic processes and metabolism are more efficiently coordinated, thus improving energy metabolism and body weight regulation.

BENEFITS:

A significant weight reduction has been observed in 85 per cent of intermittent fasting trials involving both healthy weight and overweight individuals, making it a comprehensive approach to weight management. Studies have also associated fasting regimens with overall improvements in mood, increases in self-confidence, and reduced tension, anger and fatigue. From a health perspective, intermittent fasting has also been shown to improve a variety of metabolic markers including increased HDL cholesterol, reduced triglyceride levels, improved insulin response, improvements in inflammatory markers and reduced abdominal fat.

LIMITATIONS:

The experience of hunger on fasting days can be uncomfortable, and studies have shown hunger to remain constant regardless of the how long you have been practising intermittent fasting.

Carrying out normal daily activities such as working and exercising can be difficult when operating on 600 calories or less, and concentration and memory can be affected. Strict fasting can also make social eating difficult and thus for many would not be a feasible weight loss regime.

Plant-based diets (a.k.a. vegan and vegetarian)

WHAT IS IT?

You have two main options when going plant based: vegan or vegetarian. A strict vegan diet excludes all meat and animal by-products such as dairy, eggs and honey, which the less strict vegetarian diet permits. Both are characterised by increased consumption of a variety of grains, legumes, fruit, vegetables, soy products, nuts and seeds – in place of meat and/or animal products. In doing so, vegetarian diets tend to maintain larger intakes of fibre and complex carbohydrates, as well as increased nutrient intake.

BENEFITS:

Because meat is twice as calorically dense as plant-based protein foods, taking on a vegan or vegetarian diet can result in an automatic caloric deficit, resulting in weight loss. When compared with other dietary patterns that include meat (omnivorous, semi-vegetarian and pesco-vegetarian) the trend towards weight loss is higher among new vegetarians and vegans. In addition, research has shown that there is a lower rate of overweight, obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, high cholesterol, cancers, type 2 diabetes, kidney stones and gallstones among vegetarians.

LIMITATIONS:

Vegetarian doesn't always mean healthy. Nutrient-poor diets and vegetarian diets are not mutually exclusive. For instance, a bag of crisp potato chips is technically vegetarian but is not the healthiest meal option. While this food and others like it tick all the boxes in terms of vegetarian standards, sensible food choices and avoidance of convenience foods must be emphasised. Additionally, the more restrictive the diet, the more challenging it can be to meet all nutrient requirements. As such, plant-based diets require a little more planning in order to maintain nutrient balance. Common deficiencies among vegetarians include vitamin B12 (obtained only from animal products) and iron, as well as protein, which can result in loss of lean muscle mass. Supplements are sometimes required to prevent these deficiencies. **NH**

Julia D'Angelo is a naturopath at Living Health Group (livinghealthgroup.com.au)

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Health Screen

Protecting your skin from the sun is a must, but does that mean exposing yourself to chemical-packed sunscreens? DAVID GODING explores your options for a safe, screened and sun-filled summer.

Australians have a love/hate relationship with the sun. On one hand, it's a facilitator of many of our favourite pastimes: Sunday barbeques, surfing, lazing around the pool, and (most vexing of all pursuits) cricket – all invariably conducted when the sky is clear and the weather warm. We are the sunburnt country, and we've got the statistics to prove it.

In spite of what could be called one of the most effective educational sunscreen policies in the world – the famous 'slip, slop, slap' and 'seek and slide' too – skin cancer accounts for around 80 per cent of all cancers diagnosed in Australia. Melanoma kills more people annually than the national road toll and, distressingly, more than a quarter people diagnosed with skin cancer are aged between 15 and 29.

Yes, it is well acknowledged that sunburn, no matter how mild, can have derogatory effects on your skin and potentially your health, but there is also growing confusion around the sunscreen products adorning our supermarket and pharmacy shelves. Flip a bottle over and you'll see a scary list of ingredients that even a chemistry major might have trouble understanding, and this has many people concerned. While these products do protect us from the sun, is it possible that they could also be endangering our internal health?

In short, the answer is no. "Every day around the world, scientists undertake new studies into the various side effects of sunscreens on the human body and to date there is no hard evidence to support any concern that sunscreens cause cancer," says Karen Ong, clinical director of Spotscreen and author of *Preventing Skin Cancer*. However, if you dig a little deeper, several of these chemicals don't have the cleanest of all records. The safety of some – including 'nanoparticles', found in many new sunscreens – can even depend on the correct application.

A solution, unfortunately, isn't to stop wearing sunscreen altogether. Even by taking more 'sun evasive' action instead of relying on sunscreens, in reality this isn't always possible. In light of the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency – and the outdoors-y Australian lifestyle – this is hardly choosing the lesser of two evils in order to avoid the risk of skin cancer. What you can do instead is choose a sunscreen that will benefit you and your family.

chemical sunscreens

'PABA free' means that your sunscreen is free of **para-aminobenzoic acid**, a once-popular sunscreen ingredient that was found to increase the risk of cellular UV damage in some people, as well as causing atopic allergic reactions and clothing discolouration. It's now so unpopular, the term 'PABA free' is virtually redundant. However, there are several other chemical contenders that you should be looking to eliminate from your screen ingredients list:

Oxybenzone, also listed as benzophenone-3, and the related dioxibenzene and sulisobenzene, is found in most sunscreens where it is employed as UV filter and a penetration enhancer – to help all the sunscreen to sink into your skin rather than simply float on top, where they can be easily rubbed off. Unfortunately, it penetrates rather too well. Oxybenzone is found to have an oestrogen-like effect on hormones and aggravate allergic reactions in some people. There are also concerns that it produces free radicals under UV light, raising the big issue of cancer risk. Mainstream medical establishments don't believe that oxybenzone penetrates deep enough to cause a problem, but the chemical is regularly found in breast milk and urine.

Octinoxate is another common one that pops up on sunscreen ingredients (also listed as octyl methoxycinnamate). It's rare that it causes an allergic reaction (though it can happen). While not believed to be cancer related, octinoxate may lead to premature ageing due to the ramping up of free radicals. There is often a host of other less ill-reputed chemicals used in the compiling of sunscreen, including octocrylene, which also produces free radicals, and paraben preservatives, which can be toxic in large amounts, and lead to hormone disruptions and allergic reactions.

How to use chemical sunscreens:

If you do choose to use a chemical sunscreen, choose wisely and don't rub it in. "Don't rub in sunscreen, particularly if it's a chemically based product," says Ong. "Doing so will potentially break down some of the chemical bonds rendering the sunscreen ineffective. This can have a similar effect to baby oil on your skin."

"The best way to apply sunscreen is to wipe it gently and evenly onto your skin, leaving a light milky film, as though you are thinly icing a cake," she says. "Then wait 20 minutes for it to soak in before heading outdoors."



blockers

Sunblock has traditionally worked in a different way to sunscreen, although the lines between the two have become increasingly blurred. Old-school sunblocks are mineral based, usually in the form of zinc oxide. This type of sunblock goes on, stays on and (as the name suggests) physically blocks the sun from damaging the skin. A relatively natural product, the worst you could expect from a day with zinc cream would be blocked pores. However, newer, fancier sunblocks, which employ zinc oxide, titanium oxide (also found in toothpaste and lipstick), or a combination of both, have revolutionised sunscreen by making mineral sunblock that is invisible. Initially it appeared all was very good in the sunscreen world, but it was then revealed that – in order to make these minerals invisible – they had to be very, very small. Thus, nanoparticles were created.

Laboratory tests suggest that when these nanoparticles are exposed to ultraviolet rays (UVR) they generate free radicals that can lead to DNA damage in human skin cells and, crucially, many also think the nanoparticles are fine enough to penetrate the skin.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) have stated that around 70 per cent of titanium oxide sunscreens and 30 per cent of zinc oxide sunscreens contain nanoparticles, and that there is no strong evidence that they have the strength to penetrate the skin. All major medical bodies have, so far, also given the green light.

“Most plastic surgeons and dermatologists recommend products high in zinc oxide or titanium dioxide as a must for their patients who’ve had skin cancer to prevent further UVR exposure,” says Ong. “There’s a reason for that and it’s not because they are cancer forming. It’s because apart from clothing, they’re the best product to completely cover our skin.”

How to use blockers:

Go for the old-school zinc cream if you’re at all concerned by what you can’t see. And, speaking of what you can’t see, when exercising outdoors try a little zinc on your forehead. It won’t leak into your eyes like other sunscreens can. “Zinc remains on the skin more effectively than anything else, particularly in sweaty or wet environments, where a chemical sunscreen would simply sweat off,” says Ong.

cosmetic sunscreens

The pairing of cosmetics with sunscreen sounds like a very good idea – and largely it is. The exception is an ingredient sometimes included in chemical sunscreens and often in cosmetic-based sunscreens called vitamin A palmitate, or retinyl palmitate. This is often included because vitamin A palmitate is a noted anti-ageing ingredient, included in a variety of lotions, and vitamin A in general can boost sunscreen’s effectiveness against UV rays. However, this particular variety of vitamin A breaks down under UV rays, creating chemicals that are toxic to skin cells and may even up the risk of skin cancer, which is not what you’re looking for in a cosmetic.

How to use cosmetic sunscreen:

Steer clear of sunscreen and daytime cosmetics that include vitamin A palmitate. Instead, if you’re looking for its famed anti-ageing benefits, seek it out in a night cream.



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THE DEAL WITH vitamin D

Sun exposure is harmful, sunscreen is harmful, and now sun avoidance is harmful too? Well, it’s not in the same league as the first, the jury is still out on the second, but yes, avoiding sunlight altogether has definitely contributed to a rising incidence of vitamin D deficiency in Australia. “It’s not only the most common nutritional deficiency in the world, but it’s also the most common medical condition, affecting at least one billion people,” says Dr Michael Holick, author of the *The Vitamin D Solution*.

You can take a vitamin D supplement, but it’s nowhere near as effective as sunlight. “If the body could say which method it prefers to get its daily dose of vitamin D, it would give an enthusiastic standing ovation to sunlight sources of vitamin D rather than a pill,” says Dr Holick. “After all, why else would it spend so many millions of years perfecting this clever and self-regulating process?”

GETTING ENOUGH...

Unfortunately, sunscreen can also block vitamin D absorption. SPF15 reduces vitamin D production by 95 per cent and SPF30 by 99 per cent. The key is to expose yourself whenever you can in winter, when the days are short, and in summer get a five-minute dose in the morning and late afternoon. But don’t get carried away, more is not better in this instance. Vitamin D supplements are still a good option for the elderly, pregnant women, and for others unable to get sufficient sun exposure. **NH**

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Nature's Facelift

Forget invasive products to tuck, tone and tighten – nature has a skin-smoothing remedy that has been coined as a ‘facelift in a bottle’. SHANNON DUNN writes.

In an age of injectables and overnight procedures to help lift, smooth and defy the clock, there's an all-natural remedy to skin ageing that's stealing the limelight for its ability to gently and naturally promote cellular growth.

I'm talking about squalene: a fat-soluble antioxidant that is found naturally in the skin and, more importantly, in olives, wheat germ and even sugar cane. Our own levels of squalene play an integral role in the youthfulness of our skin: it has antibacterial properties and has been proven to work against free radicals, atoms that can cause damage to skin cells, and is a natural sun protection factor (SPF) booster. This means that it can help prevent skin damage from exposure to ultraviolet light – one of the most common causes of premature ageing.

However, as we age, natural squalene production declines and reserves can reduce significantly, impairing this natural protective function. Replacing squalene topically can produce desirable benefits, particularly for those over 40. "It's an ingredient that has proven itself to be an effective moisturiser and emollient agent for producing products that have a nice, spreadable texture," says natural beauty expert Annmarie Gianni

(annmariegianni.com)

"Squalene also aids in the absorption of other nutrients, thus it can be used to synergistically improve the effectiveness of a product."

Squalene, Gianni warns, shouldn't be confused with squalane. Although they are almost identical in substance, the latter is traditionally sourced from shark liver. "Concern over this exploitative process has led to the use of other sources of squalene, such as olives and sugar cane," she says. "In the last 40 years that there has been a market for this ingredient, many of the deep sea species of sharks with high amounts of squalane have been hunted to near extinction. Not only is it inhumane, it's not sustainable."

The squalene from olives – often found in beauty products, and notably in the Botani (botani.com.au) skincare range – is easily absorbed into the skin and helps dissolve sebum while enforcing the skin's natural lipid barrier. It's also highly stable and has a long shelf life, making it an attractive ingredient for formulators, retailers and consumers alike.

Skincare specialist, educator and chemist Samantha Miller (thenakedchemist.com), who suffered from psoriasis for most of her life, sings the praises of the olive-derived ingredient that she uses regularly on herself and with clients.

"If there was only one oil we could ever use in our dry skin formulas, then this oil would be it," she says. "I like to combine it with evening primrose oil because squalene is low in linoleic acid and combining it with this gives it an added boost. This combination leaves the skin hydrated, radiant and positively youthful."

According to Miller, the most notable characteristic of the ingredient is its ability to "rapidly penetrate the skin's tissues at an average rate of three millimetres per second". Other benefits of using olive squalene in a daily skincare routine, she says, include:

- Increases antioxidant exposure, is highly stable against oxidation and can help prevent age spots



- Soothes dehydrated, cracked and ultra-sensitive skin
- Helps skin retain its natural oils
- Speeds the healing of the skin and promotes cell growth
- Helps to reduce the appearance of wrinkles
- Softens rough-textured skin, leaving no oily residue
- Helpful to relieve symptoms of eczema, psoriasis and post-operative skin
- Helps to boost cellular regeneration and oxygenation. **NH**

6 Ways To Use SQUALENE

1 Blend essential oils, such as lavender, with olive squalene to boost the antioxidant properties and to help de-stress at the end of a busy day.

2 Make your own anti-ageing facial serum with five millilitres each of rosehip and macadamia oils, 10 millilitres olive squalene and four drops of geranium essential oil.

3 Because it absorbs rapidly, use regularly as a hand moisturiser and cuticle conditioner.

4 After cleansing and toning, apply squalene over face and neck. This works as an excellent primer, helping make-up to glide on.

5 Beyond skin, squalene can also be applied to the hair as an intensively hydrating conditioner.

6 Apply to dry elbows, knees and cracked heels to heal and hydrate.

Shannon Dunn is a journalist and eco beauty editor. Find out more at www.ecobeautyeditor.com



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Wellness in perspective

JANELLA PURCELL talks us through her health predictions and tells us how we can make 2016 your year of healing and health.

Janella Purcell
janellapurcell.com



BEATING: STRESS

Cortisol is the main stress hormone released by our adrenal glands when we're in a state of 'flight or flight'. The hormones released by our adrenal glands – adrenaline, cortisol, norepinephrine, DHEA, sex hormones and others – need to be in a delicate balance to be working effectively for us; if not they will cause all sorts of issues with our weight, thyroid health, energy levels, to our skin, hair, mood, libido, appetite, and motivation – everything really. And having one more kale smoothie is not the answer, nor is starving yourself, or pushing yourself to do daily 6am CrossFit classes.

Beat It: 2016 is going to put a spotlight on our hormones and why they're so messed up.

Correct nutrition is so important as many of us know, but it is only part of the solution. Just like a seed, we need more than just food. We need sunlight, clean water, a time for rest, for growth, for rejuvenation and transformation. Being in a constant state of fear that something really bad is going to happen is damaging our health far more than many of us realise.

BEATING: ADRENAL FATIGUE

A 21st century epidemic? Yes, I believe so. Adrenal fatigue is likely to become the new black in healthcare, and rightly so. This increasingly common condition is the result of years of 'burning the candle at both ends'. Our 24/7 lifestyles have caught up on us: we are over-busy and we eat poorly and often don't sleep enough, and we don't make time to do the things we love and need to do

like exercise, play, get among nature. All this work and no play has the potential to make us unwell; chronic stress leads to the overproduction of cortisol, which may in turn cause weight gain (and sometimes loss), depression and blood sugar problems. It is not uncommon for stress to also affect fertility, gut health and general vitality too.

Beat It: We can treat adrenal fatigue using herbal medicine and wholefood supplements, and by ensuring that meditation and gentle exercise like tai chi or maybe yoga is in our daily routine. You also need to tweak the not so good habits that have formed over time that are not supporting you. 'Joy' is the key here. If it's not bringing you joy, then perhaps it needs to go.

"I predict that many of us will start to look a little deeper into how our stress levels are affecting our health in general...maybe gluten wasn't the only bad guy after all."

BEATING: FOOD INTOLERANCES

First it was wheat, then dairy, and then fructose – shouldn't our guts be in perfect health now that we've cut out all of these 'bad' foods? Unfortunately, the state of food intolerances seems to be getting worse, not better, and more and more people are suffering with digestive discomfort. What's going on? I believe that 2016 will show us that what we're eating may not be the only problem.

Beat It: There's been speculation that genetically modified crops (GMOs) can have a toxic effect on our systems. A 2008 study published in *Food Science & Nutrition* says that animal toxicity studies with certain GM foods have shown that they may toxically affect several organs, but also that many years of research with animals and clinical trials are required to properly understand these effects. Another factor, again, is our 24/7 lifestyles and how they're affecting our digestion.

BEATING: FERTILITY ISSUES

After 20 years in private practice, I have noticed a threefold in fertility issues. Many female clients coming into my clinic for pre-natal care or reproductive issues almost expect there is going to be a problem. This is concerning, but unfortunately not surprising. It has almost become the norm to turn to IVF to get pregnant and many couples expect not to fall pregnant within the first year, and even then worry they won't carry to full term.

Beat It: This really is a serious issue, and one that I hope is taken more seriously in the future. I personally have battled with endometriosis and the myriad of problems associated with estrogen dominance, but I was in the minority. I think we'll start to hear more about just how much damage hormone disruptors are doing. These are in the chemicals in our cosmetics and cleaning products, the hormones in animal feed, BPA's and phthalates in tins and plastics. Rather than immediately opt for IVF, I think we're likely to see more couples looking at reducing their exposure to these man-made hormone disruptors and increasing their pathways of detox. In other words – more detox and less re-tox makes for an easier menses and pregnancies. **NH**

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Maldives **MEDICINE**

A spa becomes more than a spa when it's found in the Maldives. The combination of idyllic weather, crystalline water and, of course, five-star treatment makes it a nirvana for those seeking to escape the humdrum of city life and restore their vitality (and then some). TATYANA LEONOV tells us about her experience in paradise.





I meet my therapist on the boardwalk and she leads me down a flight of stairs and into another realm. Lying down on my stomach, I am momentarily concerned about not being able to watch the colourful fish dart around the coral reef. But a small, strategically positioned mirror takes care of that. The pressure of her fingers is just right. As the massage therapist pushes down and works her magic, my muscles relax and I close my eyes...just for a moment. I'm in a deep state of calm, and struggle to force my eyes open for as long as I can to take in the scenery.

I'm in an underwater treatment room at LIME Spa in the idyllic PER AQUUM resort on Huvafen Fushi island in the Maldives. These are the first ever underwater treatment rooms in the world – and it's as extraordinary as it sounds. The entrance to the spa is located above water, where there are more treatment rooms, but the novelty of being underwater is hard to surpass.

The PER AQUUM portfolio comprises of four properties all up (two in the Maldives, one in Dubai and a recent addition in Zanzibar) and the LIME Spa concept was created eight years ago especially for the property collection. "It was designed to offer something completely different for our guests," says regional director of LIME Spa,

Anantara Naladhu Riyaa Dhoni



Elizabeth Regan. “The idea was to turn the normal thought and impression on its head, offering a black and white menu, with sleek, elegant and daringly sexy images. There are no rolled-up towels or frangipani flowers to be seen here.”

Huvafen Fushi has long held a reputation as the playground of the elite with plenty of celebrities having called in at one time or another (George Clooney, Kate Moss, Tom Cruise, Liz Hurley, Linda Evangelista and Naomi Campbell, to name a few). It’s cleverly laid out with beach bungalows situated amid lush vegetation – so you can’t see the other villas but have stunning vistas out to sea – while the lagoon overwater villas offer that quintessential Maldives experience. Guests at PER AQUUM Huvafen Fushi can also enjoy ‘spa cuisine’ at restaurant RAW, where the kitchen team only use fresh organic produce and specialise in house-cured meats and pickled foods that are low in salt and refined sugars. Being able to choose nutritious meals in paradise is crucial to overall health and I enjoy the

plethora of choices. Many resorts in the Maldives offer accommodation and half or full board meal bundles and managing buffets day and night can be challenging.

It has probably occurred to most who visit here that the Maldives is as close to nirvana on Earth as you can get. Comprising of around 1190 atolls (a mix of resorts, local and uninhabited islands), it is not uncommon to arrive into the capital of Male only to be whisked off on a seaplane or speedboat to your own little patch of paradise. Some guests choose to stay at just one resort for the duration of their stay while others jump around and sample a few. I am the latter traveller.

At PER AQUUM Niyama I spent my days eating, spa-ing and swimming – the perfect holiday combination, if there is one. (Or the perfect life combination...we can all dream). Niyama used to comprise of just one island: Chill. But as of mid-2015 it has been extended into a two-island resort with the launch of a sister island called Play. A bridge connects the two atolls and it’s easy to move between

MORE RESORTS TO TRY

ANANTARA VELI MALDIVES RESORT,

Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort and Naladhu Maldives make up the Anantara island trio, unique because nowhere else in the Maldives are there three atolls located in the one lagoon. Each resort offers a completely different vibe and it’s common for guests to stay at one resort and then return a year later to experience another.

VELI is for lovers (adult only).

NALADHU is popular for private parties and anniversaries (home to just 20 villas).

DHIGU is the family-friendly resort with plenty of choices for mini mortals, spanning everything from special kids’ check-in packs to a calendar full of educational activities the whole family can enjoy, such as coral planting.

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SUNWARRIOR

Photo: Steven Hymas



PER AQUUM Huvaafen Fushi LIME Spa

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the islands with most guests opting to travel the short distance by bike. Niyama restaurants offer great variety in terms of both cuisine and setting. You can enjoy an Asian fusion feast at Nest, a new restaurant nestled amid banyan trees, or South American-African delights at Tribal. Subsix, the underwater restaurant, is a highlight for both the well-executed dishes and subaquatic setting.

I received one of the best massages I've ever had while listening to the soothing sound of waves gently lapping against the sand, and I was left beside my rose petal-scattered bath with a bottle of champagne afterwards.

One evening, after dinner, I returned to my room to find a spa therapist waiting for me. There was a footbath and massage table set up on the balcony and an ever-so-faint citrus fragrance in the air. I received one of the best massages I've ever had while listening to the soothing sound of waves gently lapping against the sand, and I was left beside my rose petal-scattered bath with a bottle of champagne afterwards. This was part of the Aroma Dreams Package, an option in the new Drift by Per AQUUM menu, and I don't know of anywhere else



PER AQUUM Huvaafen Fushi underwater treatment room

in the world where you can partake in such an indulgent treatment – they even left cookies out for me.

A stay at Niyama can be as relaxing or as active as you want it to be and the two fittingly named islands (Chill and Play) make it easy to tell them apart. That's not to say you can't chill out on Play or run amok on Chill, and you can even head to your own private islet if you so desire. A small group of us jumped in a boat and were whisked away to a patch of powdery white sand half an hour away. We ate pre-prepared and packed bento box lunches and drank champagne, and even beanbags and umbrellas were brought along. For three hours it felt like there was no one else in the world except us luxuriating in our own private island paradise.

My last treatment at Niyama was Intracuticals Oxygen facial – a great

option after a day out in the sun. PER AQUUM is the only company in the Maldives offering this powerful hydrating skin refresher and I'm told it's used by celebrities such as Madonna and Channing Tatum. And recommended by skincare professionals all over the world – sold. A combination of oxygen and serum on my face is applied using a pressurised system, and 45 minutes later I walked out of the spa feeling like a new person. At dinner that night I was told I look reinvigorated too. My guess? It's the Maldives medicine – sun, spa and sea. **NH**

For more information about the resorts visit peraquum.com and anantara.com. Maldives is easy to reach via Singapore. See singaporeair.com. Stop over in Singapore on the way to extend your holiday. See siaholidays.com.au.



*"Life is different
now and I'm
ready for it"*

Faye Browne

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Living in Balance Retreat

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Spirituality & Healing Retreat

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Caveats of the crimson wave

That 'time of the month' can be confusing. If you're craving chocolate while simultaneously cursing your cramps, the solution could be in your lifestyle, not in the snack food aisle. NAT KRINGOUDIS debunks some of the most common untruths about menstruation.



Dr Nat Kringoudis
natkringoudis.com.au

I've enjoyed debunking many mistruths over the years. At times we were fooled by things we now take as a given. We once thought fat was the enemy; now we know otherwise. We also once believed leg warmers were awesome over tracksuit pants. Thankfully these untruths have come and gone, leaving us relatively unscathed (save for some terrible photos of the latter). So when it comes to debunking your period, I'm only too glad to share, since it would have to be one of my all-time favourite topics, and one we seem to miss the mark on time and time again.

Many women have found themselves feeling clueless and completely disconnected from their bodies. We've not necessarily been made aware of the ebbs and flows we experience each month, often because we have a negative relationship with our bodies, or our symptoms have been masked by contraceptives. Hormone contraception – think the oral contraceptive pill, the Mirena, Implanon, and the like – has a nullifying effect on our hormones, in most instances preventing the waves and surges of our hormones each month. It is for this reason we can often find ourselves confused: because of the sad reality that we've never been given the chance to understand our bodies.

There's so much to know when it comes to our hormones and our menstrual cycles – it can be an overwhelming task to begin to understand. But fighting against it only sets us up for further disconnection, so it makes sense to get clued up on the facts. I want to debunk the top five myths I see in the clinic to help take you another step further in your quest for happier hormones.

You're supposed to have PMS

PMS, or premenstrual syndrome, is a sure sign of hormone imbalance and while it's common, it certainly isn't supposed to be there. Most often PMS hits when progesterone is low, so taking good care of



your hormones with good nutrition, the right amount of sleep, exercise and managing stress is a sure step in the right direction.

You can get your period without ovulating

A 'true' period always follows ovulation, but we may experience 'hormone bleeds' that occur at the time we'd ordinarily expect our period to arrive. However, 99 per cent of the time we are actually ovulating – it's just a matter of understanding when this happens in your cycle as it can change depending on a swag of factors including stress, change in environment and weight loss (and sometimes gain). The clue is that it's very often more like spotting, without flow or associated symptoms like period pain.

Your period should come the same time every month

A regular cycle is our aim, but our bodies can (and sometimes should) bend depending on our surrounding influences. Stress, poor diet, excess exercise, travel, chemical exposure and our environment impact our hormones. As a means of 'coping', or protecting itself, your body will sometimes delay ovulation in times of high pressure. Once our body regains its regular regime, it will readjust and set things back on track again; but remember, if these things are a constant problem in your life, they can impact your cycle long term.

Period pain is normal

Period pain is a sign of 'stagnation', and while so many women suffer from dysmenorrhea, it's often related back to lifestyle. The trick is working out what drives your symptoms. Period pain is very commonly diet related, so removing inflammatory foods that contribute to the pain for one cycle can be enough to notice change.

The Pill will 'fix' your period

Unfortunately there is no magic bullet when it comes to regulating your period. And while taking the Pill will allow you to have a period every month, it's not a 'true' period. If your cycles are already out of whack, the Pill won't actually address the issue of hormone imbalance. The key lies with working out what's going on so you can adjust your surrounds to take your body to better health.

Understanding your body can at times be tricky business, but observing what shows up each month can provide you with a host of clues. Allow your symptoms to ignite your curiosity and begin to explore what it's telling you. The results can be amazing! **NH**

For more information, you can check out Nat Kringoudis' e-course library for more information on debunking ovulation, PCOS, stress and your thyroid.



Naturally

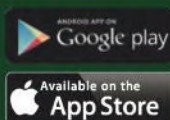
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Make it BEAUTIFUL

Whether you're a DIY diehard or simply looking for a new project, these simple beauty recipes from *Vinegar Socks* will make a great addition to your home remedy repertoire.

Premium lip balm

Don't fret if your smile has been wiped off your lovely lips because they are cracked and dry. This will change in no time thanks to our extremely nourishing lip balm, made by you!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 glass or ceramic bowl
- 15 g beeswax
- 15 g virgin, cold-pressed coconut oil
- 30 g jojoba oil
- 3 drops of honey
- 3 drops of lavender
- 8 to 9 small lip balm tubs

METHOD

Mix all ingredients together except for the lavender oil in a glass or ceramic bowl. Melt the ingredients

carefully and slowly at a low heat by sitting this bowl atop a pot of steaming water. Be careful not to overheat it as the ingredients are extremely heat sensitive. Once all the bees wax has liquefied, add the lavender oil to the mixture while stirring. Now, quickly and carefully, pour the liquid into the lip balm tubs. Beeswax hardens quickly when cooling.



WHY IT WORKS:

- **Beeswax** is a highly agreeable fat component and can be easily mixed with the other ingredients in this recipe. It has skin-protecting and moisturising properties and a soothing effect.
- **Coconut oil** is antibacterial, antiviral and fungicidal. It fights infections, supports the skin's natural healing process and reduces scar formation.
- **Jojoba oil** has a natural sun protection factor of 3–4 and is rich in vitamin A and E. It is easily absorbed by the skin, penetrating the deepest

layers. Although it is called an oil, it is actually a liquid wax.

- **Honey** is a natural antiseptic agent, is antibacterial and anti-inflammatory. It facilitates in healing wounds.
- **Lavender oil** is antiseptic, antibacterial, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory and has pain-relieving properties.



Homemade apple cider vinegar

It's possible to make vinegar from any fruit containing sugar, but apple cider vinegar is a favourite and is highly praised for its healing benefits. The following recipe will give you a low acidity apple cider vinegar. The shelf life of vinegar is so long that you might consume it before it goes off.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 to 3 apples, cut into small pieces (include peel and core)
- 2 x 1 litre wide-necked glass jars
- Approx 600 ml (2 ½ cups) water, at room temperature, enough to fill a jar
- 2 tbsp honey
- Cheesecloth or fine muslin
- Piece of string, or a rubber band

METHOD

Place the apple chunks in a sterilised jar and add enough water to fill it. Stir in the honey. Cover the jar with a piece of cloth and secure. Leave in a warm, dark, dry place – light will slow or kill vinegar production.

After about two weeks, the water will become cloudy and white foam will appear on the surface. Alcoholic fermentation is taking place as natural sugars change into alcohol.

When the apple pieces sink to the bottom, strain the solution into a sterilised jar and cover with the cloth as before. Store the liquid for a further four to six weeks.

The alcohol will now start to convert into acetic acid through acid fermentation and a white, gelatinous layer will form on the surface. This is called 'the mother' and is made up of vinegar bacteria and cellulose, which is not only fine for consumption but also makes the vinegar more wholesome. Colour changes and cloudy deposits occur naturally in unpasteurised vinegar.

Start tasting your vinegar regularly after about six weeks. If an alcoholic smell remains, store the vinegar for a while longer and taste it periodically until there is no alcoholic flavour. Bottle the vinegar and seal it tightly with a non-corrosive lid for everyday use.

WHY IT WORKS

- Apple cider vinegar is rich in natural enzymes and supports our natural bodily functions. It is anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and supports wound healing.
- It also prevents the spread of putrefactive bacteria in the gut, improves kidney performance and tightens tissue and skin.
- And it's a sublime hair conditioner! NH

This is an edited extract from Vinegar Socks by Karin Berndt & Nici Hofer, published by Hardie Grant, RRP \$34.95



THINKSTOCK AND VINEGAR SOCKS BY KARIN BERNDT & NICI HOFER



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BEAUTY Forecast

LISA O'NEILL has had her eye on fashion catwalks, make-up artists' kits and the hottest salons, and she's uncovered a list of totally haute beauty trends that you should be trying in 2016.

The word on the street is to let your natural beauty shine through in 2016, which means we have more time to enjoy all the things we want to be beautiful for this summer. Days at the beach, cocktails on rooftop bars and dinner dates at the latest food truck locations all just got a little easier with minimalist make-up and organic colours.

Make-up

SUBTLE SMOKE

The smokey eye has also been given an update with make-up artists eschewing kohl-rims and heavy blacks in favour of the 'muted smokey eye'. According to Nude By Nature's Clint Dowdell, make-up artists are focusing on softer colours such as taupe, as well as browns and neutrals, to create a sultry effect that warms the face. "Try using a brown mineral eyeliner as a base across the entire lid before applying our nude eye palette to add a deep, matte effect with the darkest shade pressed across the entire lid and blend through the crease," Clint advises.



PICTURED: Ultimate Nude Eye Palette, \$24.95; mineral eye liner \$14.95, nudebynature.com.au



FEELING BLUE

I don't want to alarm anyone, but there's a hint of the '80s lurking in the beauty aisles at the moment. But before you break out the fluorescent daywear and dust off your oversized accessories, this version has contemporary flair, and it's pretty – so, so pretty.

Although blue make-up has been lying low for the better half of two decades, thanks to numerous fashionistas flaunting shades pastel, navy or royal blues, it's back with new fervour. Make-up artist Gemma Skane (gemmaskane.com) recommends starting your foray into blue by trying dark blue eyeliner applied directly to the lash line. "I then smudge with my finger to blend it slightly upwards on the lid before applying another layer on the lash line in a bolder colour, which looks especially gorgeous on brown eyes," Gemma says. "I use Eles, a natural make-up line with lots of pigment and their dark blue eyeliner is fab."

For blue eyes, try shades that are either a lot lighter or darker than your eyes so the colours contrast rather than act in competition.



PICTURED: Eles Sapphire Sky Felt Tip Liner, \$30.00, elescosmetics.com

Skin

GLOW ALL NIGHT

Skin this season is all about minimal make-up and maximum glow. Think Victoria's Secret models – you mightn't have their giraffe legs, but this is one us mere mortals have a shot at: beautiful, vital-looking skin. Make-up can only add (or hide) so much, so make 2016 the year you perfect your au naturel look with hydration and exfoliation. Dowdell says the hottest look in Europe right now is a clean and fresh complexion, which is mostly achieved by exfoliation. Skane uses Sodashi's Nourishing Repair Treatment to slough off the dead skin cell build-up.

"You can use it as a mask, too," she says.

To put the moisture back in, try a facial oil like Cedar + Stone's Equinox Face Serum, which is a combination of rich oils infused with clear and rose quartz that will hydrate the skin and heal any blemishes. Once you've covered the base work, Dowdell says an illuminator is key to getting your glow on. "I'm all about the glow after seeing a danced-all-night-party-glow look on the catwalks recently, although it isn't quite wearable as they use Vaseline," Dowdell says. "Instead, I love to create a dewy glow around the eyes and cheeks with our illuminator."



PICTURED: Nude Soft Focus Illuminator, \$22.95, nudebynature.com.au; Cedar + Stone Equinox Face Serum, \$38.00, cedarandstone.com.au; Sodashi Nourishing Repair Treatment, \$130.70, sodashi.com



TAN-TOURING

With contouring's star continuing to rise, tantouring – or tontouring, depending on which trendsetter you speak to – is the latest and greatest beauty hack. Essentially, you contour just once a week with a natural sunless tan product, freeing up some serious space in your beauty routine.

Start off by applying a face-specific tanning product over your face, neck and décolletage to provide an all-over glow. Then, using a foundation brush, gently sweep a slightly darker tan product on the areas you'd normally contour: under the cheekbones (from just below the apple of your cheek up to the top of your ear), just below your hairline on your forehead and, using a smaller brush, under the tip of your nose and down the sides of the bridge. Once you've done that, gently blend with your fingertips and wait a few hours for the magic to happen. Extend the life of your tantouring with regular moisturising – if you don't use an acidic toner, it should last about five days. This is also a great look for lazy beach days when make-up can be a hassle.



PICTURED: Lavera Self Tanning Face Cream, \$22.49, lavera.net.au

Hair



SIMPLE STYLING

According to hair stylist and make-up artist Emilie Spianti (zefflamantrose.com.au), it's time to put away the hair straighteners and embrace the natural style of your hair. Start with a textured haircut and then let your hair dry mostly naturally with a quick blow dry to the roots of the hair to provide a lift. If you want to, you can apply a texturising spray, which will settle any frizz and give an effortless beach-beautiful look. If you have a love-hate relationship with your foils and dyes, you'll be pleased to know that low-maintenance colour is also in. "A natural balayage colour that looks like you've spent three months on vacation, ocean side, is the best look this summer," Spianti says.

For up dos, maintain the less-is-more trend and allow tendrils to escape messy buns, loose braids and low ponytails fastened at the nape of the neck.



PICTURED: Fuente's Kite Surf Sea Salt Spray, for salons see fuente-australia.com/au

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Treatments

ICE, ICE BABY

The celebs are queuing up for facials with an icy finish according to Aurora Spa founder Lyndall Mitchell. "You'll see cold or icy elements on the LA celeb spa menus, mainly because the therapeutic benefits are perfect before a big event," Mitchell says. Aurora Spa's Cellular Hydrating Facial uses chilled 'beauty globes' to infuse the vital elements of masks once the skin has been cleansed and exfoliated. "Beginning with a rehydrating cleansing treatment, deep exfoliation, followed by our signature ice massage to erase fine lines and signs of ageing," says Mitchell, "we then perform an acupressure massage for rebalancing and conclude the ritual with a personalised masque and hydration treatment."

You can also DIY and purchase an ice roller (or go totally budget and grab a couple of ice cubes) to whizz over your face after a mask or your nightly skincare routine. The cooling effect is supposed to be great for shrinking pores and reducing redness and inflammation.



COFFEE LOVERS' DREAM

Maybe she's born with it, and maybe it's caffeine. We're already enamoured with the old cuppa joe, but now coffee has also filtered down (no pun intended) to the beauty scene for its various benefits. In eye creams – such as 100% Pure's Coffee Bean Eye Cream – it reduces puffiness and brightens the dark circles. It's also the latest and greatest in the body scrub game with ground coffee beans providing a gentler removal of dead skin cells and reduction in cellulite – I love La Mav's Coffee Bean Body Scrub. Coffee is also making an appearance in face masks, as it's touted to refresh and restore skin's radiance.



Want to try DIY? Mix a tablespoon of ground coffee beans with a heaped teaspoon of coconut or almond oil. Add a tablespoon of coconut sugar and a sprinkling of cinnamon and gently massage the scrub over the body. Leave on for 10 minutes before rinsing off with cold water.

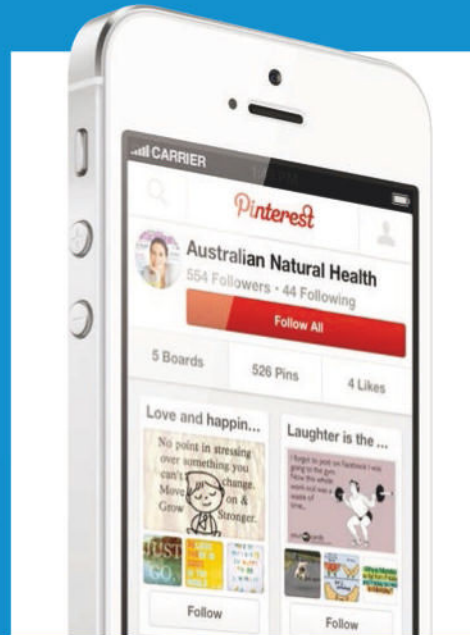
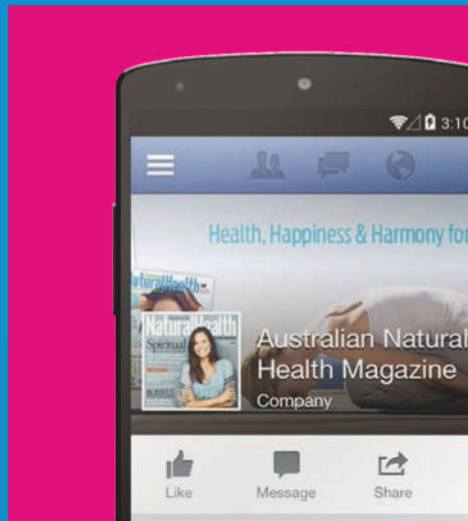
ACUPUNCTURE FACELIFT

While the Chinese have practised acupuncture to treat skin conditions for thousands of years, it's taking off in the Western world now as it offers a less invasive, cheaper and chemical-free alternative to botox and surgical facelifts. The procedure works on two levels; the first is to work with your inner health, such as digestion and hormonal balance, to treat the roots of any skin issues such as acne. The second is using the needles to increase blood circulation and stimulate collagen production, which is thought to hydrate the skin, improve elasticity and tone, and reduce fine lines and redness. Even those with a needle phobia will be ok with this one with the facial needles so fine they're barely noticeable (phew). NH

PICTURED: 100% Pure Coffee Bean Eye Cream, \$18.95, nourishedlife.com.au; La Mav Coffee Bean Body Scrub, \$29.95, lamav.com

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Natural hair OVERHAUL

Whether you're tired of your old cut or just looking to tame tousled tresses, there is a natural solution out there for you. **MADDIE LAKOS** speaks to experienced hairdresser Vince Sferlazza about how to give your hair a natural overhaul for the new year.

Changing Style

Walking out of the hairdressers flaunting a fresh hairstyle always feels amazing, but the key to looking your best without piles of product means getting a cut that suits your look and your lifestyle. "When styling somebody's hair, the most important part of the consultation is trying to find out what the person wants, what suits their lifestyle," says Vince Sferlazza of Vince & John New Image. "So, for example, if she plays a lot of sport or doesn't have much time to do her hair, we can adapt the style."

Whether or not you can sport a certain look, says Sferlazza, also depends on the condition of your hair. "Everyone is different; some have dry hair, thick hair, fine hair – it's about finding a style that works for you, not necessarily what today's fashion is, because that haircut isn't going to suit everybody."

"The approach is to have a natural style so that you can re-create the same style at home without a problem – in the salon we can create anything, but at home it's a different story for most people; ideally your haircut is 'wash and wear' and will sit nicely."

Growing Your Hair Long

It sounds like a contradiction in terms, but the golden rule of growing long hair is actually getting frequent haircuts. "If you want to grow your hair long, for starters, you need regular haircuts – every six to eight weeks – because the more you cut your hair, the stronger and longer it gets."

While avoiding the hairdresser for months at a time will inevitably result in longer tresses, they won't necessarily be healthy or easily maintained. "If you keep growing your hair without cutting,

"If you want to grow your hair long, for starters, you need regular haircuts – every six to eight weeks – because the more you cut your hair, the stronger and longer it gets."

you are going to have very dry hair with ends that are very fine," says Sferlazza. Anyone who has ever experienced split ends knows how fragile they can make hair, and if length is your aim, breakages are not your friend. Sferlazza says, "To give new hair a chance to grow, you need to cut the rest of the hair in order to keep the volume. If you grow your hair long without getting it cut, you'll almost always get thin hair."

Cutting It Short

Undercuts, pixie cuts and bobs aren't everyone's cup of tea, but it can look and feel fabulous. "Any hairstyle that comes to about the shoulders will suit anyone, because you can work with it and you can make it suit the face and so on," says Sferlazza. "But, generally, if you have a nice bone structure, you can have any hairstyle – you could shave your hair completely off! It looks nice on some people but not on everybody." Once you've gone short, there's no overnight fix to bring your long locks back, so if you do decide to take the plunge, it's important to know what you're getting into. "If someone wants short hair, we always have a very good, long conversation first; it's not something we can fix if you come in the next day and don't like it. So we check the options, and if it suits the customer, we do it."

Some people are ready for drastic change, and others are not. If you fall in the latter category, the best move is to go short in stages by getting shorter and shorter haircuts each time you visit. "If you want long hair now, we have hair extensions, and if you want shorter, you can have it on the spot. But if you're not 100 per cent sure, then take it step by step."





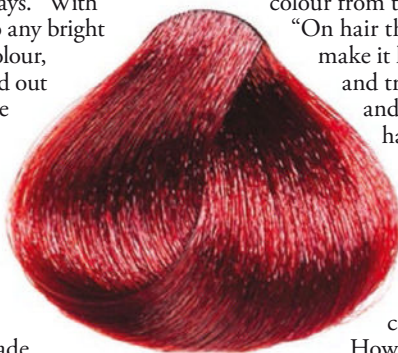
PRO TIP: *If you want to see if you look good with bangs, or a fringe, Sferlazza recommends trying a clip-on one first. He says, "These days people often visualise what it's going to look like, but if you can buy a clip-on fringe and try it on, why not?"*

Changing Colour

Messing with your hair colour can be addictive, especially if you're keen to flaunt brighter shades. But even the most natural colours require some consideration. "When we pick a colour, it depends on whether it is to cover grey hair or change the colour of the hair – and that can depend on what age you are and so on," says Sferlazza. In an era where pink and purple hair isn't so much strange as it is hip, you'd think that you could have almost any colour you wanted. But Sferlazza warns that some shades can have a more drastic influence than others. "We look at skin colour and eye colour when we look at hair colours," he says. "With very, very fair skin we can do any bright colour, but if we do a dark colour, they tend to look very washed out – sick almost – so they'd have to use a lot of make-up and so on, which becomes a lot of maintenance. Whereas if you have nice olive skin, then dark hair is beautiful."

Covering Colour

If you're choosing a colour to cover greys, picking a shade aligned with your natural colour is ideal. "Natural colours always look the best because there is no regrowth, it blends in well



and doesn't damage the hair," says Sferlazza. However, if you are one of many who want a totally fresh, full-coverage look, colouring gets a little more complicated. "To achieve different colours, especially bright colours, you almost always have to bleach the hair, which causes a lot of damage," he says. "If you are adding colour into the hair – like going from blonde to brown or brown to auburn – it's no problem, but if you're removing colour, brown to blonde for example, this damages the hair."

Lightening Hair

As an importer of Herbatint products, Sferlazza knows the importance of using natural colours: "Herbatint contains no ammonia and is a natural permanent colour that not only doesn't damage the hair, but also improves the condition of the hair." However, it is almost impossible to remove colour from the hair without the use of chemicals. "On hair that is already light coloured, we can make it lighter with a chamomile shampoo and treatment that revives blonde colour and makes it look brighter. But it doesn't happen overnight; it could take two or three weeks or months."

"For blonde hair on the spot, where we have to remove colour, you have to use chemicals."

If you've got your heart set on bright or blonde tresses, again you can choose to make a drastic change. However, to ensure your hair stays healthy while being lightened, you can take baby steps. "If you want a drastic colour change, we can do it gradually and not damage the hair so much,"

"If you are adding colour into the hair – like going from blonde to brown or brown to auburn – it's no problem, but if you're removing colour, brown to blonde for example, this damages the hair."



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Sferlazza says. “We’d start with highlights and then keep adding more highlights, and then put lowlights. Highlights we usually do every three months, but we can do touch-ups every six weeks if you want.”

The Care Factor

There’s more to healthy hair than meets the eye. “If you visualise a fish’s scales,” says Sferlazza. “If you touch in one direction it’s smooth, but if you go the other way it’s rough, and hair is the same principle; and when the cuticle is closed the hair looks shiny, when it’s open it looks dull or matte.” Dry, brittle or unruly hair is usually a product of open cuticles, which is why frequent colouring can make your tresses lack the softness of natural hair. “To fix this you have to refill the hair and close the cuticle using conditioners, treatments, oils and so on.” Hair care begins with the condition of your scalp, which is why the right shampoo, conditioner and brush are also so important.

Brushing

Sebum – the natural oil produced by your skin to keep it nourished and conditioned – also plays a huge role in hair health. Sferlazza says, “Years ago, before conditioner came to the market, people used to brush their hair for 100 strokes; that was because it would spread the oil from the scalp to the hair, working as a natural conditioner.” Anyone who frequently styles their tresses will brush their hair often without thinking about it, but the right brush can really make a big difference. “We have special wooden brushes that stimulate blood circulation and spread the sebum from your scalp to your hair,” says Sferlazza. “If you use a plastic brush it can create static, but the wooden brushes take static away.”

PRO TIP: “Always start at the ends of the hair, and not at the top,” says Sferlazza. “If you have a snag at the ends and pull at it, you can break the hair. So once it is all knot-free, brush from the scalp.”

Heat Protection

If you use a hairdryer, curling tongs, straightener, or perhaps all three, it is vital that you protect your hair before styling. “Anytime you use anything hot, you need to use a heat protector – most dryers and curling tongs are around 180 degrees, which is far too hot to be healthy for hair.” Unfortunately there are very few all-natural products that do this, but you can find more natural options if you look. “Some natural oils can protect the hair against heat. But then the hair is too oily, so often you’ll see linseed oil or argan oil, or other refined oils, mixed with other less-natural ingredients that will protect the hair and help your style.”

Good Products

It might be tempting to go cheap on your hair products, but if you want to make beautiful hair a priority, the extra dollars will be well spent. “If you treat your hair, buy a product for treated hair; and if you have natural hair, buy a product for natural hair.

The same goes for thin hair, oily hair, dry hair and so on,” says Sferlazza. Although it can be too easy to fall for the flowing locks you see in marketing campaigns, Sferlazza warns that generic or non-professional products are often a waste of time. “A lot of products in the supermarket, I’d say 90 per cent, don’t work,” he says. “If you’re wanting thick hair, for example, you might end up with a product that has lot of silicone in it, which coats the hair and gives the visual appearance of thick hair, but isn’t making the hair healthier or in better condition. So you have to ask yourself, ‘Is it really working?’”

He also warns against opting to use household products on your hair, like cooking oils. “It is only special oils, or very refined oils that you can use on your hair,” Sferlazza says. “Even if they’re good for the body, they might not be good for your hair.”

PRO TIP: Sferlazza speaks from experience when he says, “If you buy hair care in a health food store, you will not get a bad product because they are very conscious of their ingredients.

“We supply Herbatint to several health food stores and each product we sell to them, they go through the ingredients one by one, and anything with ingredients they don’t like, they will not stock.” NH

“We have special wooden brushes that stimulate blood circulation and spread the sebum from your scalp to your hair.”



WE LOVE *these products*

1 Herbatint Permanent Colour

This permanent hair colour with a herbal base is totally ammonia free and gentle on the hair. Perfect for covering greys or for adding colour – and you can tell everyone it's 'natural', "winks".

\$21.95, herbatint.com.au



3 Tek Elite Oval Hair Brush

Made from olive tree wood all the way from Italy, this brush will do more than just detangle. It's equipped with special anti-static rubber to calm the hair and unique wooden teeth to massage the scalp and nourish your locks.

\$81 at vinceandjohnnewimage.com.au

5 Herbatint Chamomile Shampoo

This fresh-smelling chamomile shampoo turns tarnished blonde bright again with natural ingredients. Frequent use will gradually lighten hair without doing damage.

260 ml for \$15.20, herbatint.com.au



7 Grown Alchemist Shampoo with Damask Rose, Black Pepper and Sage

Your hair will never smell or look so good with this nutrient-rich and naturally fragrant formula made with certified organic botanical ingredients.

500 ml for \$29.95. Conditioner available for \$34.95 at grownalchemist.com

9 Yarok Hair Spray

Give your look long-lasting hold with alcohol- and cruelty-free hairspray made with natural ingredients. It's also non-aerosol and environmentally friendly, so up-style lovers can spray away, guilt free!

120 ml for \$24.95 at nourishedlife.com.au



2 Botani Coconut Glow Body and Hair Oil

A lightweight and non-greasy hair oil that provides nourishment for both your skin and hair. A great natural alternative to silicone-based products without compromising on smooth, silky tresses.

125ml for \$31.95, botani.com.au



4 Pure Hair Food Moisture Masque

Packed with yummy ingredients like Australian macadamia oil and wheat protein, this moisture masque is designed to keep your locks luscious – sans sulphates, parabens and animal testing, of course.

\$28.90 at purehairfood.com.au



6 Everescents Heat Protector Finishing Cream

Protect your hair when blow-drying, straightening and curling. This lightweight cream from Everescents also helps to reduce frizzies and flyaways and protects the surface of the hair, delivering a beautiful, natural shine without leaving hair oily or limp.

\$24.90 at everescents.com.au



8 Dr. Bronner's Organic Hair Crème in Peppermint

Style your hair sans synthetic ingredients with this minty-fresh-smelling product from Dr. Bronner. Formulated with coconut oil for shine and jojoba for manageability – yum.

177 ml for \$14.95 at drbronner.com.au



10 Lavera Colour and Shine Shampoo

Love your new colour? Help it stay put with a colour-loving shampoo enriched with mango and avocado extracts.

200 ml for \$15.35; conditioner also available, 150 ml for \$15.35 at nourishedlife.com.au





VITAL veganism

Getting all your body needs without animal products isn't always as simple as eating your greens. ELENA LACOVU finds out how to make your foray into plant-based eating the right way with help from health and nutrition experts.

While plant-based diets used to be the domain of the hipsters, activists and pop celebrities with personal chefs, it has quickly become apparent that veganism is more than just a fad. In fact, it should be a consideration for those looking to improve their overall health and vitality through diet. Based on a 2010 national Newspan survey (commissioned by Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing), seven out of 10 Australians are eating more plant-based meals in the belief that eating less meat and more plant foods improves overall health. Congruous with these beliefs, studies have shown that a well-planned vegan diet can reduce the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and other chronic diseases while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and boosting longevity. But regardless of whether you are considering a vegan diet for health or for ethical reasons, the transition from omnivorous eating to the elimination of all animal products is not necessarily a smooth one. Understanding your body during this transition phase – especially your digestive system – is key to meeting daily nutritional needs and, thus, supporting your energy levels, vitality

and general health. There are challenges in knowing what to eat, and how, but they can be overcome with a little bit of nutritional know-how. According to the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council, the vegan diet has potential as both a sustainable and healthy choice for many Australians, stating that “plant-derived foods given as alternatives to animal-derived foods, such as nuts, seeds, legumes, beans and tofu, can, for all Australians, increase dietary variety and provide a valuable, affordable source of protein and other nutrients, found in meats.” Let’s see how you can do it.

Challenges and fixes **SUPPORTING DIGESTION**

It is possible, in some people, that a lifetime of eating animal products has compromised their system’s ability to absorb nutrients from plant sources. To counteract this, explains integrative nutritionist and raw food health coach Scott Mathias (scottmathiasraw.com), it is important to focus first and foremost on digestive functionality. “Allowing your gut and the digestive tract to first clean from the weight of the animal protein and dairy is important,” he says. “Then your body can accept the plant-based foods and begin absorbing all their nutrients.”

The plant-based transition

“How we transition is a matter of personality,” says Robyn Chuter, naturopath and nutritionist at Empower Total Health (empowertotalhealth.com.au).

“Some people embrace dramatic change, eliminating all animal products at once – especially those coming from an ethical perspective related to the treatment of animals – but most people becoming vegan for health take the one-

at-a-time route: first they will cut out meat, then fish, eggs and lastly dairy.”

Chuter suggests that, independent of reason for going vegan, you should attempt the dramatic change. “This way the health benefits will be more immediate and impressive, which will encourage you to keep going,” she says. “However, make sure you get advice from a professional to ensure you’re meeting all your nutrient needs.”



Eat well, eat variety

**Where to get your
vitamin needs,
by Robyn Chuter**

B12: look for it in fortified foods and supplements, it's hard to get enough vitamin B12 from plant sources alone

Vitamin D: from exposure to sunlight – around 10 to 30 minutes each day – or take a vegan vitamin D3 supplement

Iodine: found in seaweeds, nori, wakame, dulse flakes – or take a vegan iodine supplement

Omega 3 fatty acids: found in chia seeds, flaxseeds, hempseeds and some green leafy vegetables

Selenium: found in brazil nuts; three a day will help you meet your needs

Zinc: found in pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds

Iron: found in pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, legumes.

Calcium: found in some Asian greens, almonds and in sesame seeds and tahini

ONE VEGAN DAY – MEAL PLAN

by Robyn Chuter

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Dessert
<p>Green smoothie made with kale, bok choy, baby spinach and high-nutrient fruits such as banana, blueberry, raspberry, kiwi, orange. Blend with a plant based milk such as hemp, oat or whole-bean soy, and add seeds such as hemp, flax or chia.</p> <p>If this doesn't satisfy your hunger, a bowl of rolled oats served as a porridge or muesli topped with some grated apple with a plant-based milk is a good alternative.</p>	<p>Have a large salad, even in winter, made with raw vegetables. Include legumes such as lentils, dried, peas or beans, either in the salad, or alternatively as a soup or as a lentil burger. People with high energy needs should add wholegrains like quinoa or rice, or a piece or two of good wholemeal and multigrain bread.</p>	<p>Small salad as entree, or raw vegetables with a dip such as hummus.</p> <p>Vegetable and legume casserole, as a stew or as a soup; or a stirfry with tofu. Include plenty of green leafy vegetables. For those with higher energy needs: add brown rice, quinoa or good-quality legume pasta to meet energy needs.</p>	<p>Have a serve of fresh or stewed fruit, or baked apples with nut cream or frozen banana.</p>

Extra nutrition: 30 to 40 grams of nuts or seeds per day. These can be sprinkled on a stirfry, in a salad or added to your smoothie. Include three Brazil nuts per day to cover selenium needs.

Introduce one new plant-based food a day into the diet as a meaningful solution to the absorption process.”

It's not uncommon during this phase to realise that your body is intolerant to foods such as yeast, gluten, soy, or corn, Mathias explains. “Test this by eliminating them from your diet, one at a time for a week or two, to see how your gut feels and what happens to your symptoms. Keep a food journal and record changes to digestion, sleeping patterns and mood, on a weekly basis. This will help you figure out what your body likes or doesn't like.”

ADDRESSING DEFICIENCIES

Any restrictive diet requires planning to ensure you include everything your body needs, and veganism is no exception. Deficiencies go hand in hand with digestive functionality and absorption capacity. “You think you have deficiencies because you have eliminated meat from your diet; but it's simply pre-existing conditions of the digestive system, which have become exacerbated due to the confusion from the new plant-based foods that are entering the system,” says Mathias. Chuter concurs. “In such a case, the nutrient absorption rates will get higher over time as your body starts to adjust. There may be a period of around six months that you feel you're not getting enough nutrients; speak to your nutritionist about possible supplements

to get you through this initial stage, but most of the time it's simply a matter of allowing the digestive system to adjust.”

NUTRIENT-DENSE EATING

Superfoods are a great way to enrich your diet because of their high density in nutrients, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. During the transition phase, superfoods such as chia seeds, goji berries, maca and lucuma may offer many nutritional benefits, says dietitian Kara Landau (travellingdietitian.com). “What's important,” she explains. “Is not to rely solely on superfoods, but to strike a balance and incorporate foods which provide a healthy balance of fats, proteins, fibre and essential nutrients in our diet.”

In the same vein, consuming additional nutrients through smoothies and juices may make meeting your daily requirements easier. In her book, *Green Smoothie Revolution: The Radical Leap Toward Natural Health*, Victoria Boutenko explains that the main advantage of juicing over smoothies is that juice requires little digesting and can be assimilated immediately into the bloodstream, allowing the digestive system to rest. For those who suffer from severe nutritional deficiencies, and those who have a highly irritable digestive system and cannot tolerate roughage, a pulp-free juice from a cold-pressed juicer can provide valuable nourishment. For everyone else, consuming roughage can take a load off the body by

improving elimination of toxins. When these toxins have been removed, the body has a greater ability to absorb nutrients, thus improving digestion. Landau suggests, “If you're making a juice make sure you add more vegetables rather than fruits and, if you're making a smoothie, this is a great place to incorporate protein, fats, fibre and other essential nutrients instead of sugar-filled fruits and powders.”

Although it can be challenging to meet your amino acid needs with plant-based protein alone, there are sources that can help you meet your full protein needs. Recent research by the Institute of Food Technologists in Chicago concluded that algae, quinoa and pulses (legumes) are considered to be the best wholefood plant-based protein sources. If you choose to use a protein powder, Landau suggests opting for a seed-based powder such as hemp, which is rich in omega 3 fatty acid (important when you're not consuming fish or animal protein) and is also more easily absorbed and digested.

TO RAW OR NOT TO RAW

In addition to what you eat, there is also the matter of how. The way food is prepared can have an impact on the nutrients that make it into your body. Research by Cornell University found that foods such as carrots, spinach and tomatoes when boiled or steamed supply more antioxidants to the body than they do raw. The downside being that cooking destroys their vitamin C levels. In addition, certain vegies such as broccoli are much healthier eaten raw than cooked. “During the transition phase, having partially raw and cooked foods with every meal is the healthiest option,” says Landau. “If it's all raw there can be more dietary fibre going into the system, and this can place more pressure on the body and cause digestive problems.”

But the choice to go raw, or not, is largely dependent on personal preference. Mathias says, “Pure raw food is suitable for all body types, we just need to get the digestive system functioning at its best – to finetune our absorption process – and then we can eat a pure raw food diet.” **NH**





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The *wholehearted* approach



Tired of having a rough relationship with what's on your plate? Intolerances aside, our overcomplicated understanding of 'what is healthy' isn't doing our diet, or our stress levels, any favours. MADDIE LAKOS speaks with Dani Venn, The Wholehearted Cook, about having a balanced approach to healthy eating.

Our relationship with food, both good and bad, is rooted in history. For younger generations, at least, it is hard to believe that we didn't always have access to the apples all year round, or to frozen meals and gluten-free, sugar-free and low-carb foods. These things are a product of 'evolution' – or at least a desire to make food more accessible, easy and (of course) profitable. Nowadays, we live in an era where the concept of 'healthy' is ever changing: one week, it's sugar free and the next it's Paleo, and the next gluten free. Then there is the all-encompassing label of 'clean', meaning inevitably that some foods are considered 'dirty' – and it's not the organic potatoes you bought at the market. All these concepts work on the premise that some food is good, and that other foods are bad. And though it seems fitting to demonise things like potato chips and soft drink, this, too, is an extension of the trend towards ignoring our bodies.

"We face a constant barrage of different and often conflicting health messages," says Dani Venn, who many will know from the 2011 season of *MasterChef*. "I find myself to be one of the many who are confused about what is healthy, but I am also curious to know why we have lost touch with our instinctive ability to know what is good for us."



Under the banner of The Wholehearted Cook (thewholeheartedcook.com), Venn has begun to explore the idea of 'real' food – speaking to industry experts about their approaches to healthy eating. "I'm more about how people ate probably 100 years ago, when food was less complicated, and about going back to more plant-based eating," says Venn. "I've always dabbled in dieting, but overall I just don't think diets are sustainable. In the long term we want to be able to listen to our own bodies, to listen to our own bodies cues, which is often really hard."

Venn is an ambassador for Ovarian Cancer Australia, an organisation that helps women across Australia understand ovarian cancer, which has the lowest survival rate of any women's cancer. While there are many contributing factors to ovarian cancer – such as age, genetics and family history and hormones – eating well and maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle do play a part. "One of my tenets is 'honouring your body'," says Venn. "That means giving yourself time to do some exercise and to relax and rest, and also feeding yourself with nourishing food."

She is quick to note she's no nutrition or wellness expert, rather "just an everyday cook who is interested in healthy food". But as far as being a part of the wellness movement goes, Venn is happy to put her hand up. "I would like to think that I'm

part of the wellness 'movement', but I wouldn't consider myself an expert or anything. I want to encourage people and families to eat wholefoods instead of pursuing trends or trying to get loads of superfoods and fancy ingredients into your diet."

"I find myself to be one of the many who are confused about what is healthy, but I am also curious to know why we have lost touch with our instinctive ability to know what is good for us."

This stress-less approach to healthy eating is part of what Venn calls the wholehearted life: a life full of happiness and contentment, which, for her, starts in the kitchen with nutritious whole food. "I grew up on the outskirts of Melbourne, in the bush, so I've always been really connected to land."

"For me seasonality is really important and trying to buy organic where I can. It's a little more expensive, but I think if we put our priorities in place, spending some extra money on our food is important because, at the end of the day, the health of our bodies is inherent to our happiness."

See over for some of Dani's recipes...



BLACK QUINOA, CHICKEN & SWEET POTATO BIRYANI

Serves 4 to 6

INGREDIENTS

- 700 g free-range chicken thigh fillets, chopped into bite-sized pieces

Marinade

- 1 tbsp freshly minced or grated garlic
- 1 tbsp freshly minced or grated ginger
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ cup full-fat natural yoghurt
- ½ lemon, juice only
- 1 tsp sea salt

Spiced Quinoa

- 2 cups black quinoa, rinsed (or white/red is fine too)
- 6 cardamom pods
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 bunch coriander leaves, washed and roughly chopped
- ½ bunch mint leaves, washed and roughly chopped
- 3 tbsp coconut oil (or olive oil)
- 1 red onion, finely sliced
- 1 tsp freshly minced/grated ginger
- 500 g sweet potato, peeled, small dice
- 100 g natural sliced almonds (crushed cashews would work too)
- 4 medjool dates, pip removed, finely chopped (If you can't find medjool dates, you could also use dried currants or cranberries)

METHOD

Place chicken in a mixing bowl, add garlic, ginger, cumin, turmeric, cinnamon, yoghurt, lemon juice and sea salt. Mix well to combine. Cover with cling wrap and place in fridge to marinate for three hours or overnight.

Add quinoa to saucepan along with cardamom pods and cinnamon as well as four cups of water. Place over medium-low heat and allow water to reduce. When water is almost completely reduced, cover with lid, turn heat to low and allow to steam for five minutes.

Remove from heat, pick out spices, place quinoa in a mixing bowl, fluff up quinoa using a fork, season with salt flakes and fold through chopped coriander and mint, reserving a little for garnish.

Add a tablespoon of coconut oil into a frying pan over medium heat. When hot add onion and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until onion becomes golden and slightly crispy. Remove from heat, set aside.

To cook sweet potato, add a tablespoon of coconut oil into the same frying pan over medium heat, add ginger and sweet potato and cook for a few minutes then add ¼ cup of water and continue cooking, stirring occasionally and adding water when needed until sweet potato is softened and cooked through; this might take about 20 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

To cook chicken add a tablespoon of coconut oil into the same frying pan over medium-high heat. When hot add chicken and marinade and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until chicken is slightly golden and cooked through. Remove from heat, set aside and ensure you reserve the yummy juices that the chicken has been cooking in.

To serve, toss together chicken, quinoa, onions and sweet potato, garnish with extra herbs, dates and almonds. Serve warm.

GREEN CURRY MUSSELS IN A COCONUT BROTH

Serves approximately 3

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg mussels, scrubbed and de-bearded*
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 2 tbsp of Thai green curry paste**
- 1 tsp chopped garlic
- 1 stalk lemongrass (white part only), finely chopped
- 2/3 cup coconut milk
- 1 long red chilli, finely sliced
- 1 tbsp chopped coriander or Thai basil, including stalks, plus extra for garnish
- 1 lime, juice only
- 2 fresh kaffir lime leaves, very finely sliced
- Steamed brown rice or quinoa, to serve

*To de-beard mussels, yank the hairy, seaweed looking thing on the side of the mussel out as much as you can, carefully.

**When choosing a curry paste, make sure it's preservative and sugar free with no weird numbers listed on the ingredient list, or try making your own.

METHOD

Place a large saucepan that has a fitted lid over high heat, add 1/2 cup of water and all of the mussels. Place lid on saucepan and steam for five minutes.

Meanwhile, add coconut oil to a separate fry pan or wok over high heat. Once hot add green curry paste, garlic and lemongrass and cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally.

Turn heat down to low then add coconut milk, chilli and coriander, cook for a further minute, stirring to combine. Once mussels have opened and are cooked, add mussels and the lovely salty mussel water from the frypan into the coconut milk mixture. Toss well to combine. Add lime juice, stir and taste. It should be a little salty, hot, sweet and sour.

Serve mussels with a soup ladle of broth and garnished with coriander and kaffir lime leaf and steamed brown rice or quinoa. If a mussel doesn't open you can try and gently pry it open, it doesn't mean that it is off.

Dani Venn on...

Raw desserts:

I think it's a great movement. I think sweet-lovers are getting on board and they're feeling better by swapping out stuff. You don't have to do it 100 per cent of the time; I don't, and I don't think it's realistic to say, "I'm never going to have a slice of my mum's sponge cake again." Because it's delicious! But I do think that these ingredients make you feel more satisfied, so there are a lot of benefits in raw food and raw desserts because they are filling and nutritious.

MasterChef:

"I think *MasterChef* has done wonders for food in general, people are thinking more about food and are a lot more interested in food and in cooking for themselves and other people! Knowing what is in your food is so important, so if you start cooking for yourself then you are inevitably going to be a little more health conscious."

Happiness:

"I think you have to live a life that is true to yourself and makes you happy. You really do, and I know it's a cliché, be true to who you are. It is hard to not get pulled into materialistic values, and do what other people are doing, and compare yourself to other people. But you need to find the things that make you happy, that make you feel fulfilled."





RAW CARROT CAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 500 g carrots, finely grated
- 1 cup medjool dates, seeds removed
- 1 ½ cups oat flour or make your own by blitzing whole rolled oats into a fine powder in a food processor (for a gluten-free alternative you could use almond meal)
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 cup walnuts, roughly chopped

Icing

- 200 g raw cashews, soaked overnight or place in boiled water for a few hours
- ½ cup thickened coconut cream
- 1 tbsp raw coconut oil
- 1 tbsp raw sweetener like maple, honey or agave
- ½ lemon, juice only
- Extra walnuts, pumpkin and sunflower seeds, for garnish

METHOD

Line a 20 cm-wide pan with baking paper on the base and sides. I find using a loose-based cake pan or springform pan is perfect for this recipe.

It's really easy to do all your prep such as chopping walnuts, making oat flour and grating carrots in a food processor. Once this is done, blitz dates in a food processor until a mushy, smooth consistency is formed and then add in carrots, oat flour, spices, walnuts and pulse until mixture is well combined.

Place mixture into cake pan and smooth out and leave it in the fridge to set for an hour or so. Or if you would like two layers of cake (pictured), add only half of the mixture and then add icing – wait for it to set for an hour or so then repeat. I've also served this dessert in small jars, because everything looks cute in a jar.

To make icing, place cashews, coconut cream and oil, raw sweetener and lemon juice into a high-powered food processor and blend on high until a smooth consistency is achieved, scraping down the sides as needed.

To ice the cake, remove cake from pan, smooth over icing and garnish with pumpkin, sunflower seeds and walnuts. YUMMO!

You can support Ovarian Cancer Australia by having an Afternoon Teal in February, Ovarian Cancer Awareness month. Register online at ovariancancer.net.au





LEMON, APPLE & ROSEMARY SLICE

Makes about 12 squares

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup desiccated or shredded coconut
- ½ cup almond meal
- ½ cup coconut flour*
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup (please don't use fake maple syrup, you may as well use refined sugar)
- 1 vanilla bean, seeds scraped
- 2 free-range eggs
- 1 lemon, juice and zest finely grated
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ cup chopped apple, peeled and diced**

Icing

- 3 cups desiccated or shredded coconut
- 1 tbsp maple syrup
- 2 tsp finely chopped rosemary
- 1 tsp lemon zest

**If you don't have coconut flour you could use an extra ½ cup of almond meal)*

***If you have stewed apple you could also add in about ⅓ cup of this – I tend to always have soft apple in my fridge for baby and it works well in this recipe*

METHOD

Preheat fan-forced oven to 160°C or 170°C; if your oven is super hot try it at 160°C. This slice can easily burn.

Line a 20 cm square baking pan with baking paper.

Combine coconut, almond meal, coconut flour, maple syrup, vanilla bean, eggs, lemon juice and zest, baking powder, apple and oil into a bowl and stir well to combine. Pour into prepared baking tin and smooth out the batter so that it's even. Pop into oven and bake for about 20 to 25 minutes. Keep an eye on it; the slice should spring back when touched when ready.

To make your icing you will need a good blender or food processor. Add in the coconut, maple syrup, rosemary and lemon zest and blend on high until a smooth paste is formed. Add water if needed to make the icing smooth. Use desiccated if your blender or food processor isn't high powered.

When slice is cooked, remove from oven and allow to cool slightly before icing. Cut into squares to serve.

Keep slice in an airtight container for up to a week or so, but I like to eat it slightly warm. **NH**



Worth the



squeeze

Let's put it out there: we absolutely adore juice. But not all squeezes were made equal. MADDIE LAKOS decided to dig deeper than her fruit and vegetable drawer and find out what really makes juicing healthy.

There is something about juice that is evocative of health and vitality. Maybe the colour, or the fresh taste, or maybe the packaging; whatever it is that makes juice magical, it's easy to forget that not so long ago we were swearing off cold-pressed's concentrated cousins at the grocery store – largely due to their excess of sugar and calories. Although the nature of juice has changed along with our suppositions of its nutritional value, experts acknowledge that, when it comes to liquid foods, it's easy to have too much of a good thing. Yes, while it is true that fruits and vegetables (as the major components of juice) contain a wide variety of health-promoting nutrition, when it comes to meeting your daily needs (and beyond), more is not necessarily more.

Vitamins and minerals

Although cramming loads of fresh food into a glass might seem like a sure-fire way to bolster your nutrient intake and thus health, by upping your two-and-five to four-and-10, you are more likely to increase your calorie consumption than increase your health. "You only need so much of any one vitamin or mineral in a day," says dietitian Melanie McGrice (melaniemcgrice.com.au). "What is left over is simply passed out as waste." And waste means it is filtered out by the liver and kidneys and then eliminated in the usual way. This isn't to say that adding a nutrition-packed green juice to your regime isn't going to improve

your health (especially if you're lacking fruit and vegetables in your day), but if you're adding one in on top of an already nutrient-sufficient diet, then bonus vitamins and minerals, you may simply find yourself taking a few additional trips to the bathroom. (Which, in some schools of thought, would be called a waste of time and nutrients.)

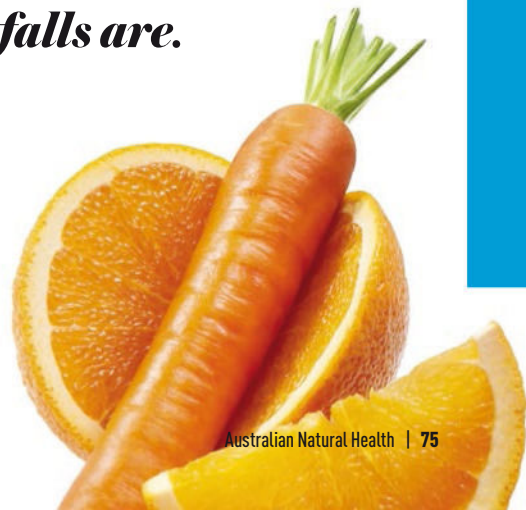
In the short term, the effects of overdoing it on vitamins and minerals are insignificant. Routinely overloading, however, can have greater consequences. An excessive intake of vitamin C for example – where levels of ingested vitamin C far, far exceed the recommended daily intake – has been reported to cause cramping and diarrhoea; symptoms that, if they occur to frequently, usually result

The key to juicing for optimum health is working out where your nutritional pitfalls are.

in malnutrition rather than optimal health. An excess of potassium (known as hyperkalemia) can mimic a heart attack by causing heart palpitations, chest pain, nausea and muscle paralysis. The good news for mad-keen juicers is that it is fairly difficult to achieve this level of vitamin megadosage through food consumption alone, but it is entirely possible if you are also consuming supplements or vitamin-fortified foods.

A blend of both worlds

While those who eat plenty of nutrient-rich foods shouldn't overdo it in the juice department, recent Roy Morgan research found that only two per cent of people surveyed were actually getting enough serves of fruit and vegetables each day, which means that 98 per cent of us could probably use a green juice in their diet. But this doesn't mean you can swap out your quinoa salad for a fruit smoothie, especially if your problem is overall nutrition. "There are very few fruits or vegetables that contain enough iron to fulfil your daily needs," says McGrice. "It would also be hard to get enough vitamin B12, zinc or calcium, not to mention protein – which is important at every meal."



The key to juicing for optimum health is working out where your nutritional pitfalls are. The condensed and glug-able nature of juices makes it almost too easy to take on an overload of vitamins and, unfortunately, an overload of calories too. “A serve of fruit juice is only 150 millilitres, so that’s just 300 millilitres of juice per day to get two serves,” says McGrice. Extra calories are great if that’s what you need more of in your diet, but as most people opting for juice are seeking to maintain their weight and improve their health, the focus should really be elsewhere. However, McGrice is quick to note, a juice will probably have less kilojoules than a latte.

To pulp, or not to pulp?

There is endless choice when it comes to selecting a juice, or even going all-out and buying your own juicer, and the first of your considerations when deciding what is best for you should be fibre.

The pulp or roughage in juice is predominantly insoluble fibre. This type of fibre is not easily broken down by the

“Many fruits and vegetables contain lots of insoluble fibre, which, well, aids the transit of things through your tummy.”

stomach, which can have both positive and negative effects. “Many fruits and vegetables contain lots of insoluble fibre, which, well, aids the transit of things through your tummy,” says McGrice. For most people who aren’t getting enough fibre, this is usually a very good thing. But for unaccustomed tummies – especially for persons with IBS, FODMAP sensitivity or an easily irritated system – bonus fibre can cause bloating and/or diarrhoea. On the other side of the spectrum, consuming additional fibre without also consuming enough water to help it pass through your system can also result in constipation and digestive discomfort.

This can be trial and error for juicers, and can even depend on the ingredients in your juice. McGrice says, “Some fruits and vegetables contain soluble fibre too; both are important in your diet.” Soluble fibre dissolves in water, meaning that juices containing soluble fibre might not necessarily be ‘pulpy’. It can also soak up water, slowing digestion and helping you feel fuller for longer. It is found naturally in apples and pears but can also be taken as a supplement; psyllium husk is a good example of supplemented soluble fibre.

BOOST YOUR JUICE

We went through some of our favourite juice ingredients and make some nutritional notes:

Product (un-juiced, edible portion)	KJ (100g) (approx)	Top Nutrient	% RDI in serve	A serve:
Spinach	200 kj	Vitamin K	655% RDI	95 g
Carrot	200 kj	Vitamin A	544% RDI	76 g
Beetroot	2	Potassium	9.6% RDI	83 g
Sweet Potato	3	Vitamin A	638%	105 g
Apple/Pear	3	Soluble fibre	N/A	166 g
Mango	3	Potassium	11.5% RDI	207 g
Acai (unsweetened)	3	Vitamin A	32% RDI	100 g
Orange	2	Vitamin C	154% RDI	131 g
Banana	4	Potassium	7.7% RDI	101 g
Blueberries	3	Potassium	19% RDI	148 g
Raspberries	3	Vitamin C	71% RDI	123 g
Strawberries	2	Vitamin C	210% RDI	161 g
Cucumber	1	Potassium	2.7% RDI	52 g



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Many juicers – typically centrifugal juicers – remove the pulp, thus taking out the insoluble fibre. Masticating juicers (such as cold-press juicers) tend to leave more pulp in and, fortunately, both juicers tend to leave the soluble fibre intact. For

Though juice drinking might make you feel healthier, it's probably all in your head.

a truly fibrous juice you'll need to ditch traditional juicers for a blender or food processor. These thick concoctions aren't everyone's cup of tea, but the added fibre intake can be worth it.

The perfect potion

The idea that a prescribed combination of vitamins and minerals via certain fruits and vegetables can result in a specific boost or state of wellbeing is a great concept, but unfortunately one that isn't true. Though juice drinking might make you feel healthier, it's probably all in your head. "Often 'energising' is a misleading word," says McGrice. "Vitamins tend not to give you a perk, like caffeine, but knowing you're having them can make you feel clean and healthy, which is a perk."

The digestion question

There are some schools of thought that say removing this pulp or making a particularly well-blitzed juice means that nutrients are more easily absorbed into the bloodstream, relieving your tummy of its digestive role and helping it eliminate toxins more easily. But although some of the above conditions do make the elimination of pulp sensible, it is not a rule for healthy juicing. "The body is an amazing thing; it can break down things on its own," says McGrice. "We really don't need to process them for it, and we don't really need to detox if our liver and kidneys are functioning well."

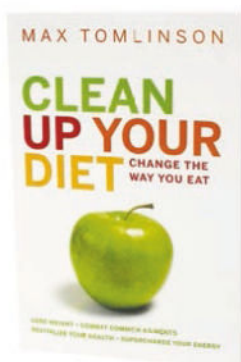
Contrary to the pulp-free theory, insoluble fibre actually promotes more rapid digestion. According to the University of Sydney's glycaemic index testing and research centre, "Soluble fibre is often viscous in solution and remains viscous even in the small intestine. For this reason it makes it harder for enzymes to move around and digest the food." This means foods high in soluble fibre have a low glycaemic index. "When insoluble fibre is finely milled," the research continues, "the enzymes have free reign, allowing rapid digestion."

Most fruits and vegetables are packed with antioxidants and good nutrition – so any juice recipe is going to give your health a boost. But if you want to get specific, you can look at which vitamins occur most commonly in specific fruits and vegetables. Understanding RDIs can be complicated, but in terms of maintaining optimal health this knowledge will be quite useful. A great example is vitamin C: your recommended daily intake (RDI) of vitamin C is 45 milligrams per day, and a serve of orange contains 85 milligrams of vitamin C, 188 per cent of your RDI – so most people don't find it hard to get enough vitamin C. Whereas the RDI of potassium is 2,800 milligrams per day and the average banana contains only 600 milligrams, which is 21 per cent of your RDI. (Bearing in mind that you do get nutrients from other foods as well.) **NH**





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You are what you eat

Health coach and holistic nutritionist Andi Lew first made a scene when she told us we could eat fat and be thin. These days she's tackling motherhood and work head on, and still putting out books.



Can you tell us a little about yourself and how you came to be in the wellness industry?

I was always very interested in natural health and very against drugs – I remember being five and being really upset about other people smoking or being forced to take cough medicine. I kind of think it was just who I was meant to be, inspiring others to be proactive in their health care choices, not reactive. Wellness is a paradigm shift: you don't wait until it's broke to fix it, and prevention is the cure. I owned a wellness centre with my now ex-husband for 13 years. He's an incredible chiropractor. We wrote my first book together and now I have five books about health, three of which are bestsellers. *Eat Fat Be Thin* created a fat food movement, educating the Western world about the benefits of good fats.

How would you describe your approach to health and wellness?

I would say it's all about connectedness and authenticity. This means being holistic in your approach to everything. We are all

connected and so, too, are our bodies – I always look to address the cause, not just the symptom. I also have this approach in emotional health. I believe communities are really important and that's why I travel so much and speak to so many people. We need to support each other more.

What is your approach to healthy eating?

I just came back from a US press tour where I went on several TV shows, inspiring people to eat less processed food and more real wholefoods. I say, if you can kill it or grow it, you should eat it. Because the food is more alive and therefore will give you more life! Eat as close to nature as possible and organic where possible for maximum nutrition. San Diego was the hub of wellness, I noticed; there was lots of mindful eating and veganism. Eating more plants is the best thing for our overall wellbeing.

Would you agree that it can be tough to balance family and career? What are some of the things you do to maintain this balance?

It's definitely challenging, especially because I also like to look after my appearance. Most single mums who have more than one child must have it even tougher than me – I take my hat off to them. My son Beaudy has always loved coming with me to work. I involve him and tell him how proud I am of him when he opens boxes or helps to pack AmazeBars – my vegan protein bars – to be ready for delivery. The other night after we finished a task, he hugged me and thanked me for letting him help me with my work. I love him so much!

Do you believe that diet is connected to both physical and mental wellness? If so, why?

There's not one health challenge that hasn't got some kind of psychological attachment. When I first graduated as a certified food, lifestyle and wellness coach, I had a follower on Instagram who said she was so inspired and wanted to be my first client. I found out she was a severe eating disorder case. We worked not on food, but self-love. It was a beautiful journey and we became friends.

What role do you think what we eat has to play in our wellness?

The more mindful we are about our food, such as where it comes from and our connection to the earth, the better our overall diet and wellness can be. That's what will help you to stay inspired: becoming more informed. By thinking about the 'process' behind processed food. Take sugar cane for example: first we remove the water, making it more concentrated, then we heat it to create raw sugar, add chemicals and bleach it to make white sugar, add more chemicals to create castor sugar, and do more things to it to make icing sugar. Is that real food anymore? No. We have stripped the real food source of nutrition like fibre, water and vitamin C and it's those other things in our wholefoods that keep us satiated. This is why people say processed food has no nutrition and why, when you eat junk foods, you will keep searching for something else because your brain is never satiated nutritionally.

Can you tell us what you love about the Paleo diet/lifestyle?

The hunger-gatherer time was about what you could pick, pluck, hunt and gather. By

There's not one health challenge that hasn't got some kind of psychological attachment. When I first graduated as a certified food, lifestyle and wellness coach, I had a follower on Instagram who said she was so inspired and wanted to be my first client.

the time the villagers could find a wild animal, wrestle it to the ground, take it back to the villagers and share the whole animal, it was weeks. They didn't eat animal protein every day and certainly have varied nutrition from not letting any of it go to waste. That's true Paleo. Not eating the same part of the same animal, such as chicken breast for example, day in, day out. And the only way they could handle that animal protein was to eat loads of greens to alkalise. I love the functional fitness aspect to the Paleolithic era too. I wrote about this in *Real Fit Food*. It's the way our bodies are designed to move. We need to

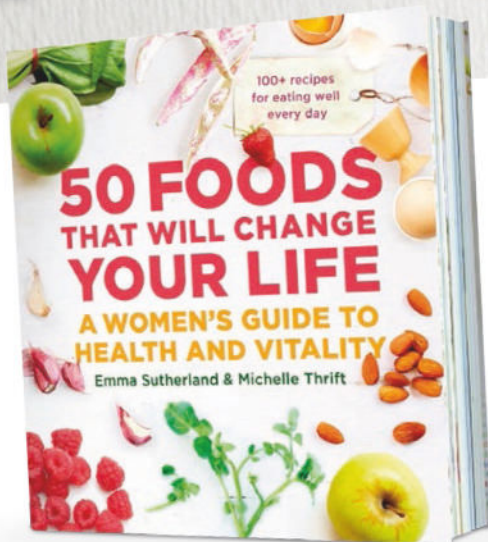
squat more. Asians still squat to work, eat, birth and go to the toilet and it's not because they don't have toilets or chairs. We are designed to move this way.

As a wellness coach, what are some of the things you find you talk to people about the most?

It's so different for everyone – I love how each person defines what wellness means for them. For some it's work-life balance and for others it's about things like how to still eat well when you're avoiding things like dairy, gluten or sugar, for example.

What are some of the things that you are doing in 2016 to maximise your health, wellness and happiness?

After spending time in the US, I'm all about giving back. I'm looking for more ways to love more and serve more. Companies like Generosity Water are setting up ways to create water for people in countries that don't have water when you buy theirs. Drinking alkalised water that's going to make a difference to someone else makes me happy. Let's pay it forward, shall we? **NH**



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Resolution

REALIGNMENT

EMMA PALMER of Moksha Yoga shows us how yogic philosophy can help us achieve our new year goals.

As we move through the beginning of the year and our January fervour fades, it is easy to have become disconnected with the resolutions we've made for ourselves. Maybe you have chosen too many goals to achieve at once, or they are too difficult to achieve right now. Or perhaps you have simply become swept up again in the pace and busyness of life and your goals have fallen to the wayside. Whatever the reason, it isn't too late to reconnect and start again. In yoga, every moment is an opportunity for a new beginning, and we can learn from this.

There comes a point where we look to deepen the way in which we live, rather than living on the surface, and we no longer expect long-lasting joy to come from superficial goals. Modern science acknowledges that our original intentions contribute significantly to the successful outcome of our goals, and that a deep connection to our true desires creates the impetus that paves the way to demonstrating our goals more authentically.

Finding your true goal

Instead of moving into a space of self-criticism and disappointment if you fail to achieve a personal or professional goal, look deeper than the superficial layer of that goal. It is the process of honest self-enquiry – or *svadhyaya* – that will help you find your integrity, for within the roots of every goal there is almost always a powerful notion of intention.

Without identifying the real underpinning intention to your goal, you will not only find challenges in the manifestation of this goal in your life, but you may find that the outcome, if any, varies greatly from the original objective. Connecting to our true intention allows us to recognise a deeper sense of purpose that is beyond the ego, both in intention and outcome. This connection affirms that all the answers we seek can only ever be found within a focused mind, and when the intention comes from that place, rather than ego, it gives power and energy behind goals in an authentic and connected way.

Intention based on integrity

Integrity does not only mean upholding core principles and values, it also means living in a state of being that is whole, connected, integrated and undivided. Michael A. Singer, author of *The Untethered Soul*, says that integrity is when all aspects of our being – mind, body, spirit and emotions – are integrated as one. It is from this place of 'oneness' that we connect to our intention and it is here that we often come to realise that our goals may be established in order to please others, or simply that they are goals that we feel we 'should be doing'. But in the end these goals never materialise because the intention is not in alignment with the calling of the true self.

This isn't always a bad thing. Sometimes part of the purpose of having a misaligned goal is to guide us towards

a more aligned, authentic one. It is said that the longest journey we will ever take is from our head to our heart, and sometimes our greatest challenges arise when we feel conflicted between the two – we tend to experience confusion rather than integrating the longing of each. Goals, fundamentally, are multilayered and require a strong foundation rooted in conviction in order to sustain the journey towards reaching the desired outcome, and this is why connecting to the intention is crucial. When we integrate consciousness into the contemplation of our decisions, we can find clarity around the goals we are trying to establish.

Inner listening

How can we connect to our true intention if the mind is in a state of chaos or distraction, subsequently blocking the intention from being heard? The stages of listening come from the ways in which the ancient traditional texts were first received, understood, processed and then actioned according to a higher truth. When applied to our own life it reflects on the ways that we can turn inwards towards the awaiting wisdom to guide us to the intention of a goal that is for the highest good of all concerned and does not just temporarily satisfy the needs of the ego.

Belief in your goals

It takes real courage and strength to make a change in our lives for the benefit not only of our own path



but for that of humanity. It takes dedication and commitment to be open and subjective enough to witness the unfolding of our day-to-day lives in order to achieve the desired change. You must trust that all will unfold in perfect timing, and make sure that your goal is in line with your authentic self. Let life guide you through the experiences and interactions with others, because our unfolding life and relationship is a mirror of ourselves reflecting back the inner work that is needed.



The yogic philosophy of intention

Sankalpa – establishing intention

A *sankalpa*, translated as resolve or vow, is an intention that has a deeper meaning and purpose and is commonly set at the beginning of every yoga class or part of a yoga nidra practice. It is designed to allow us as students to connect to a deeper resolve rather than wishing only to experience physical benefits through the practice of asana.

Sankalpa can also be used as a vow you commit to that may require consistent conscious awareness, such as being patient, less judgmental of self and others or even to focus on the positive aspect of life and experience versus the negative. It is the acknowledgement that all experiences, all interactions, come in perfect timing as our greatest teachings. The true essence of *sankalpa* is to align all aspects of self so that our true purpose has the space to come into being.

The yogic philosophy states that we observe intention in our daily life by adopting conscious and consistent awareness of our thoughts, behaviours and interactions with self and others. Establishing a *sankalpa* reminds us that we already have all we need

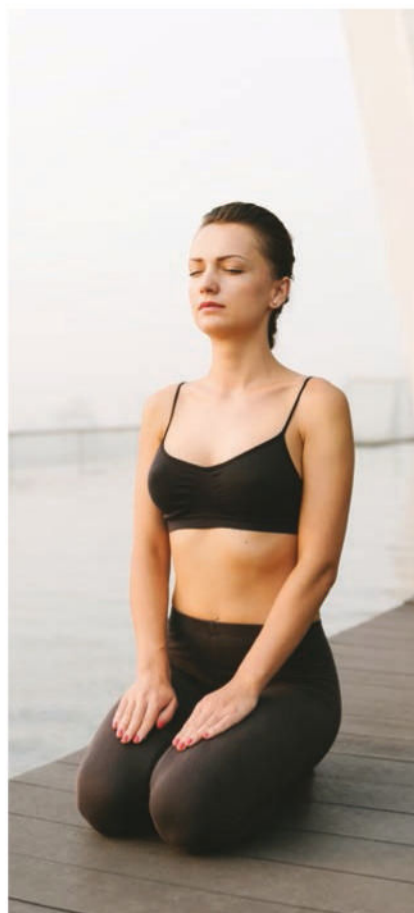
within ourselves, and when the mind is focused we have the capacity to fulfil whatever our heart calls us to do the most. The other component to *sankalpa* is to recognise that we are not alone on this path of life and that we are co-creating our lives with the support of the divine will.

Sravana – to hear, take notice of, to listen

This is the first stage of inner listening. It is about being open and willing to connect to our inner wisdom and waiting conscious to know the true yearning of the soul. We often feel a deep yearning for something greater yet struggle to find exactly what that is. For those who don't feel that strong, passionate urge yet desire change, the answer is quite simply to just follow whatever makes you curious and the answer will make itself known in perfect timing.

Manana – reflection

This is the second stage of listening and refers to the act of reflecting and being open to considering the inner calling that has arisen through the practice of *Sravana*. *Manana* is achieved only through the practice of



10 Ways To Find Your Intention

1. Ask yourself what your true purpose is. What is your deepest calling? And keep asking until the answer makes itself known and be aware that it will show itself in ways you least expect.
2. If you don't feel the fire in your belly for a particular goal, simply start by following what you're curious about and the clarity will come.
3. Allow yourself time to make quiet your mind through meditation; this will help to turn inwards and connect to a deeper place of truth and wisdom.
4. Rather than asking yourself, "What's in it for me?", ask how humanity can benefit from your goal in order for your intention to come from an authentic space without ego.
5. Allow mindfulness to generate a practice of being conscious of your day-to-day actions, reactions, interactions and desires.
6. Others will be able to reflect back to you the areas within yourself that are inspiring and make you feel most alive, so ask those who you trust for their ideas and inspiration.
7. Persevere with your process of self-inquiry and don't give up. Rome wasn't built in a day.
8. Once you have connected to an intention that motivates the goal, visualise your goal coming into fruition; as you visualise, you materialise!
9. Recognise that the fact you are here, right now and at this time, matters! Honour your authentic path, and follow your calling to fulfil your purpose.

Dharana, translated as concentration. Only through a deep state of focus and concentration can we truly reflect on the calling of the soul.

Nididhyasana – contemplation followed by action

The final stage of listening is the ability to identify what is false and only of the ego, and the identification of selfish or extrinsic motivations. In addition *nididhyasana* means to constantly commit to striving to connect with and then action the inner desire that is for the highest good and benefit of all concerned without selfish means. *Nididhyasana* requires a strong sense of courage and perseverance to bring into fruition the true calling. Awareness of the calling in itself will only take you so far; actioning that calling will guide you the rest of the way. **NH**

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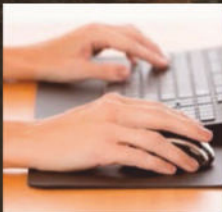
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THE ROAD LESS *Travelled*

by MIRANDA LUBY



PICTURE CREDIT



As those who wander often would tell you, travel is a form of escapism. It allows you to leave behind the well-worn routine of 'life as you know it' and enter a world of the wonderfully unfamiliar. This is particularly true of destinations that are 'off the beaten track', those uncrowded spots yet to be overrun by tourists.

They may not be the easiest places to get to, or to navigate once you arrive, but there is an inherent reward that comes from this kind of travel. And it's not just the cheaper airfare.

Spiritual educator Kim Forrester (kimforrester.net) says those who submit to their sense of adventure and seek out unique experiences often have greater satisfaction in their travels. "This need to explore our limits is ancient and inescapable," she says. "Therefore those who break free of societal expectation and fear, and allow themselves to conquer new horizons, tend to find greater fulfillment in their lives."

According to some schools of thought, these intrepid inclinations go beyond our generation of travellers and into the history of humankind. "Our understanding of what is the 'well-worn path' extends beyond our own personal memories and experiences," Forrester says. "We each carry a genetic memory within us of previous generations' experiences, and our natural longing to evolve draws each generation into completely new, utterly unexplored territory."

"In this way, we add to the generational database of experience that, in turn, will serve as the springboard for the next generation of explorers."

So, in the spirit of exploration and fulfilment, we've compiled a list of less-travelled destinations to add to your 2016 world wandering bucket list. Go on, explore – future travellers will thank you for it.

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina

One of Europe's most underrated countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina is home to incredible untouched natural beauty as well as important cultural sites and beautiful old cities. As the southeastern European country is still recovering from a war that ended in 1995, it feels as though it hasn't quite caught up to the busy pace of 2015 yet – in the best way possible. You'll be warmly welcomed by the locals with offerings of chocolate and coffee and shown around the towns as if you are the first visitor they've had in years. Go in summer for quintessential European alfresco wining and dining without the tourist prices. Located

on the Balkan Peninsula, proximal to destinations like Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a must for your 2016 travel itinerary.

2. Cuba

Visiting Cuba still feels like stepping into a time warp. American tourism is limited here (meaning they have to visit on a pre-arranged group tour), so it's kind of a privilege to enjoy the freedom to explore off your own bat. Havana, the country's vibrant capital, is oozing with a laid-back retro vibe: colourful streets, old-school cars, political graffiti, salacious street food, Cuban dancing, sombreros and cigars – Havana will have you mesmerised while you soak up its exotic flair. Modernisation is bound to hit the shores of Cuba sooner or later, so put this one at the top of your list.

3. Sri Lanka

This picturesque island country in the Indian Ocean has been on the intrepid traveller's bucket list for the last five or so years – ever since the 26-year-long civil war came to an end. But while the destination's eastern and southern coastlines have become popular beach and surfing destinations, and the country's centre a mecca for tea and yoga lovers, the north is still relatively unexplored. Previously closed off to tourists due to military fighting, the city of Jaffna is now open for business. Dotted with towering Hindu temples and fragrant fruit trees, this city is becoming a bastion of traditional Tamil art, culture and cuisine.

"This need to explore our limits is ancient and inescapable."

4. Flinders Island

You've heard of King Island but there's another lesser-known foodie haven lying to the northeast of Tasmania's mainland. Brand new on the must-visit list for many Australians, this stunning hidden secret is strewn with shipwrecks and awash with natural beauty. Think deserted beaches, diving in crystal-blue waters and hiking through untouched bush. Finish your days on the island with some freshly caught crayfish and top Tasmanian wine and you'll be floating on air.

“We each carry a genetic memory within us of previous generations’ experiences, and our natural longing to evolve draws each generation into completely new, utterly unexplored territory.”



5. Myanmar

The most intriguing new destination on the well-trodden Southeast Asian traveller's trail is Myanmar. Known as Burma in the West, the country is full of off-the-beaten-track experiences. Take meandering boat trips past gilded pagodas, visit local markets to feast on unique Burmese food and explore the landscape as diverse as a living *National Geographic* magazine. It's only been open to tourists for a few years and with new land border crossings from Thailand and relaxed visa restrictions, now is the time to see Myanmar before the rush heads over from Bali.

6. Albania

After breaking free from its communist shackles in the early '90s, Albania has now become a safe place to travel but, still, barely a tourist sets foot there.

This spectacular southeastern European country's real drawcard is its breathtaking natural beauty. Swim in the Blue Eye, a 50 metre deep natural spring that emanates a fluorescent blue colour, or one of the hundreds of Ionian and Adriatic beaches along the winding coastline, where wild lavender and sage grow on the shore among the sand, pebbles and ancient castle ruins. The low number of tourists also means Albania is a very cheap holiday and a country full of the warmest and friendliest people imaginable.

7. Serbia

More gritty than pretty, this Soviet country – and its capital city Belgrade – is often overlooked in favour of more visually appealing European destinations, but its bohemian and artistic vibe has some hailing Belgrade as the new Berlin. The Serbs love their food and booze, so

the former Yugoslavian capital is home to plenty of cafés and bars, the type you imagine to have been filled with poets and writers in the early 1900s. Make sure you visit before too many tourists overwhelm its authentic vibe.

8. Nicaragua

It's the largest country in Central America, bordering Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south, but Nicaragua is one of the least-visited destinations in the area. But it won't stay that way for long – it's going through a tourism revolution. A land of lakes and volcanoes, deserted surf beaches and lush rainforest, it's perfect for a wilderness lover while culture addicts will thrive in the laid-back coffee-by-day and rum-by-night vibe. Get a group of friends together and book out a secluded cabana before the crowds drive the prices up. **NH**



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We don't simply strive for confidence and self-love without it actually benefitting our life in tangible and meaningful ways. It is human nature to seek purpose, and to seek the instant satisfaction from doing those things that meet our purpose.

Exploring the meaning behind your desires is like the extra shove you get when you almost want to give in. It steers you in the right direction. It keeps you on course. It's a nudge to never give up. I explored this in depth with a client of mine. Let's call her Bella.

Bella was working full time in a stable job with a supportive boss yet had a strong feeling that she

was somewhat lost in life. She felt that something was missing but couldn't quite put her finger on it. It was sapping her energy and she was beginning to doubt all her choices. It was literally crippling her self-love and confidence. We began to identify her 'why' – the purpose behind everything she does.

As she was talking, I could pick up on a number of consistent themes: she clearly had a passion of helping connect people together, she spoke about how she liked to refer people to each other, and how she liked the part of her job to create the social events and informal networking opportunities.

She didn't so much like being in the thick of it, but to help initiate the connections. When I pointed out this theme, it was like a light bulb went off. Her eyes widened, and a sense of clarity swept over her face. "I never thought of it like that," she said. "I do really like to do that!" We continued to unravel her why and other persistent themes popped up, such as her love for the ocean and her pursuit for health and wellbeing. Once we articulated these, we were able to see how her current unease was largely due to her living out of alignment.

We formulated a plan that enabled her to live her why every day. This led her to create an online publication that links a coastal community over a love of good food and culture. The sense of purpose Bella was finally able to consciously relate to was a stepping stone to regaining her confidence. **NH**

Many people have difficulty uncovering their own 'why' and feel that they 'aren't passionate enough', but I assure you this isn't the case. Following these 10 questions will help you to unravel your why. Take note of the themes and consistencies across all your answers:

1. How do you spend your time?
2. How do you like to spend your money?
3. What do you think most about?
4. What do you like to talk most about?
5. How do you fill your physical space?
6. What surrounds you?
7. Describe your wildest, dreamiest, most awesome day.
8. Describe what your dream work days would look like.
9. What inspires you?
10. Who inspires you?

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HOT WEATHER *healing*

Feeling the heat in more ways than one? LINDA NOVOSAD (arjuna-yoga.com.au) tells us how you can use the principles of Ayurveda medicine and yoga practice to cool your body and calm your mind.

Images by Sera Williamson and Mardi Ball



When the seasons get warm, it is not just your body that feels the heat. Ayurveda, the sister science to yoga, teaches us that with each season we should make changes in our diet and exercise routines in order to offset the influence the weather has on our doshas. Ayurveda is a system of traditional medicine that uses these *doshas* – called pitta, vata and kapha – to understand our health and the influence different things have on it. Cool weather is inherently vata: characterised by qualities coldness, dryness and roughness, as well as irregularity and changeability. Warm weather is inherently pitta, characterised by heat, light and fiery energy. To maintain optimum wellness, regardless of the season, these doshas need to exist in balance with each other and – as with sunshine, ice cream and sand in your bathers – it is possible to have too much of pitta's summer-esque traits. According to The Chopra Center, a wellness and education centre in California, founded by doctor-come-'new-age guru' Deepak Chopra, pitta overload can result in a shorter temper, argumentative nature and indigestion.

As summer becomes autumn, these months are a great time to focus on how your exercise is linked to your overall wellness, and a reminder of the importance of balance in our lives; if you feel like you might exist in pitta overload, there are many ways you can help bring your doshas back to equilibrium. Although many yoga poses are beneficial to each of the doshas, your approach and practice within each pose will provide the greatest benefits. Most yoga teachers agree that a well-rounded practice is best and includes all three doshas (i.e. is tridoshic), but you can also focus on balancing a dominant dosha. The key is to incorporate forward bends, backbends, twists, inversions, standing, seated poses and *pranayama* (breathing) into your practice that balance this dosha. Of course, the real high point of your practice should be *savasana* (corpse pose) – where all the asana and dosha integration comes through. In summer a cooling and calming yoga practice can help balance the hot pitta energy and keep us happy and healthy all season long.



Cool your practice

A pitta-balancing yoga sequence should be practised at 70 to 80 per cent of your usual effort, and preferably in a moderately cool space. Avoid extremely heated spaces or overheating your body (Bikram is your enemy at this time). It may also be best to refrain from doing heat-generating yoga poses such as sun salutations; *chandra namaskara*, or moon salutations, and meditation are your go-to.

Try also to focus on the physical yoga experience. Push aside self-judgement or -criticism – yoga is not a competition. Your incoming breath should be drawn towards the back body and ribs while your exhalation should be drawn to releasing tension, anger, frustration or stress.

Most importantly: have fun and enjoy your time in the different poses, allowing for a softened gaze and bringing freedom and creativity into your practice – mixing up your practice, poses, studio or teacher is great to change it up a

little. Also practising twists, forward bends and side body openers are best suited to balancing pitta. Other great exercises are hiking or walking, spending time in nature, swimming or tai chi.

Pitta-balancing asana

Any poses that help to release tension from the mid-abdomen are most useful for balancing pitta constitutions. Apart from those included here, other go-to poses include *trikonasana* (triangle pose), *dhanurasana* (bow pose) and gentle backbends and other chest-opening, hip-flexor-lengthening poses. You may also like to explore cooling breathing practices such as *sheetali pranayama*, or cooling breath. By inhaling and exhaling through a rolled tongue and relaxing, *sheetali pranayama* is a great tool you can use anytime you feel the intensity of pitta – physically or emotionally.



A pitta-balancing yoga sequence should be practised at 70 to 80 per cent of your usual effort, and preferably in a moderately cool space.

CAMEL POSE – repeat three times

By providing a beautiful backbend, camel pose stretches the entire front of the body – chest, abdomen, throat, psoas, thighs, groin and ankles – and strengthens the back muscles, improves posture and stimulates organs located in the abdomen and neck.

1. Kneel on the floor with knees hip-width apart. Place palms on the buttocks, fingers pointing down. Keeping the thighs straight, breath in and push tailbone forwards.

2. As you exhale, gently lean back, opening up the front chest and pushing the shoulder blades towards each other. If it is available to you, you can move the hands down towards the heels, keeping thighs straight.

3. Hold for five to 10 breaths and then rest in child's pose.

Caveats: If you suffer from high or low blood pressure, migraines, headaches, sleeplessness, or have a low back or neck injury, you should avoid this pose. Be cautious of any feelings of breathlessness in this pose and don't overdo the backbend.

COBRA POSE

– repeat three times

This pose strengthens the spine, stretches the chest, lungs, shoulders and abdomen, tones the buttocks, stimulates the abdominal organs and opens the heart and lungs for greater oxygen intake. A wonderful pose for relieving stress and fatigue.

1. Lie belly-down on the floor, forehead and the tops of the feet resting on the floor. Breathe in and place hands on either side of chest, fingers spread wide for support and the elbows close to the side ribs. Exhale deeply.

2. Breathe in and press down into the floor with the hands, upper thighs and pubic bone and softly lift the head and chest up, straightening the arms but keeping a micro-bend in the elbows for support. Continue to breathe deeply in, puffing the chest out softly, drawing the shoulders away from the ears. Ideally your gaze should be towards the third eye – the space between the eyebrows.

3. Hold for five to 10 breaths and, as you exhale, gently release the torso slowly down onto the mat. Breathe in and turn the head so that your right ear rests on the mat.

Caveats: Avoid this pose if you suffer from a back injury, lower back issues, carpal tunnel syndrome, headaches or migraines, or are pregnant.



ONE-LEGGED PIGEON POSE

– repeat both sides

This pose offers a deep stretch and opening to the thighs, groins and psoas, abdomen, chest, shoulders and neck as well as stimulating the abdominal organs.

1. Starting in downward dog, raise the right leg towards the ceiling, pushing through the heel for a flexed foot. Breathe deeply into the side ribs and core, pressing the hands into the mat.

2. Gently breathe out, drawing the right knee towards the right wrist and the right ankle or toe towards the left wrist, resting on the floor. Your right shin should be crossing the front body. Open the hips up to ensure torso is facing front and take a peek at your left leg to ensure it is straight from hip to toe.

3. Take a deep breath in to lift the chest and place hands on the ground in front. Hold pose for five to 10 breaths and then repeat on the other side.

Caveats: if you have had a sacroiliac, ankle or knee injury, it is best that you avoid this pose due to the stress placed on these key areas. You may find this pose difficult if you suffer from tight hips or thighs.



SCAN TO SEE
YOGA FOR YOUR
DOSHA AT THE
CHOPRA CENTRE

REVOLVED SIDE ANGLE POSE

– repeat both sides

A strengthening and stimulating pose that stretches the groin, spine, chest, lungs and shoulders while stimulating the abdominal organs, improving digestion and aiding elimination. This pose also increases stamina, focus and balance.

1. Starting from mountain pose, exhale and step the right foot back and turn your right foot out 45 degrees. Make sure your left foot is pointing forwards. Take a deep breath in and bend your left knee. If possible, bring the left thigh parallel to the floor, keeping the right leg active by pulling up through the quadriceps and extending through the outer side of the right foot. Take a breath in and bring the hands together in front of the heart space, pressing the thumbs into the sternum.

2. On the next exhalation, engage the core and lower the torso towards the left knee. On your next breath, gently rotate the torso and head towards the left, pressing the right elbow against the outer edge of the left knee. Lean back slightly, away from thigh, using the core for stability and strength.

3. Stay in this position for a few breaths and, if able, twist to look over the left shoulder, top arm or hand. Lengthen and soften the belly, extending the spine with each inhalation, and increase the twist as you exhale. Inhale to come up, exhale to release the twist. Step the back foot forward gently, returning to mountain pose and repeat on the other side.

Caveats: If you have any neck issues, rotate head to look over the left shoulder or at the top arm/hand. Instead look straight ahead, lengthening through the neck or look down at the floor. This pose is also not recommended for those who suffer from high or low blood pressure or sleeplessness. **NH**





Kemi Nekvapil
keminekvapil.com

Becoming a dream maker

The beginning of the new year is a time where we often focus on ourselves, but KEMI NEKVAPIL urges us to also focus on others, to help them achieve their dreams and in return ask them to help you achieve yours.



It is the dawn of another year. Does it ever get as exciting as this: new beginnings, new goals, new dreams, and new ways of being in the world?

When we set goals, we are already on the journey to achieve them; when we have no goals, where are we going?

There are many ways to achieve your goals: you can hire a coach who specialises in the area you want to improve in; you can find an accountability partner, someone who will hold you accountable to your goal; if you are so inclined, you can create a spreadsheet to measure your progress.

There is also a way to approach your goals that not only benefits you, the individual. You can add another dimension to your goal setting by actively making sure that someone close to you achieves their goals too.

When we put the goal-setting achievements of a loved one at the same level as our own success, we enhance the experience for both parties

Now, I have to be clear on something here. Women can have a tendency to put others' dreams so far above our own that we forget our own goals altogether. To be clear, that is not what I'm suggesting here. Raise the other person's goal to the same level as your own, not above.

When we are focused on the positive outcome of a loved one's goals, it makes us present to our own goals: if our friend or family member or colleague is on track, are we on track? If they feel disheartened and unmotivated and we are actively supporting them to carry on, it positively impacts our ability to do the same for ourselves.

As we see our loved one go through the highs and lows of personal achievement, it reminds us that this is the journey. Some

days it is hard, sometimes it is easy, and other days you have no idea why you took on this ridiculous goal anyway.

You are an accountability partner, but you are more than that. When you take on this role in someone's life, you become a dream maker. In a world where there is so much uncertainty, fear and despondency, being a dream maker has never been more needed than now.

Whatever is happening in the world, people always have their dreams, big or small.

By actively making sure that you and those close to you are achieving dreams, you are adding more hope, more trust and more possibilities to the world.

As we create and achieve dreams for ourselves and others, we have no idea who is watching us; we have no idea who we are inspiring.

So when you are setting your goals for the coming year, look around you and see who needs a dream maker. **NH**

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healthy lifestyle.*

Spirit SESSIONS

MADDIE LAKOS talks to award-winning Australian artist **Xavier Rudd** about music, spirituality and feeling the earth beneath your feet.

Music has the ability to bring people together, and this is particularly true of Xavier Rudd. For those who don't know him, he has described his sound as a blend of roots, reggae and folk. But it is not the genre that people know him for, but his message. Songs such as 'Follow the Sun' from his 2012 album *Spirit Bird* still reverberate on radios and much-loved playlists of fans who can't get enough of his message: respect for the earth, respect your kin and a zest for life.

The *Spirit Bird* album is regarded as the pinnacle of Rudd's solo career, capturing the most beautiful aspects of his voice, his songs and his spirit. But across his nine studio albums, Rudd has been celebrated for his ability to weave genres together – from tribal beats to delicate acoustic guitar. In 2015 Rudd wrapped up his most recent project, *Nanna* – a reference to Mother Earth – with the help of his new collective The United Nations. This collaboration was, in many ways, an homage to world peace, symbolising "all people coming together around the globe to return to spirit, respect the ancient ways and protect the Earth and the very essence of creation".

Characterised by tousled blonde hair, bare feet and a bright-blue, pensive gaze, Rudd emanates freedom of spirit. But for all his bohemian flair, he is naturally grounded. The 'rock and roll'

lifestyle of song-writing, touring and performing often doesn't make wellness a priority – something Rudd has learnt to overcome. A diligent vegetarian (and activist against animal cruelty and world hunger) and yogi, Rudd also champions self-love and respect for your body when it comes to health. "I maintain my health and wellbeing through lots of yoga and training, eating well and treating my body like a temple," he says. "I think that's the

"I maintain my health and wellbeing through lots of yoga and training, eating well and treating my body like a temple."

only way to maintain good health on the road and when life gets busy; it takes time to learn and it's important to be strict with your program and your choices."

Although the wellness industry has experienced a boom in recent years with mindfulness and meditation on trend and more and more people favouring organically produced products, shunning processed food and questioning the effects of capitalism and

materialism on society – Rudd believes this movement is as old as time. "Wellness has always been a movement, or it is one of the oldest movements on the planet," he says. "I think it is great to see people coming back to it after such a massive detour, and with social media it's a lot easier to grow support and to spread understanding on these types of things."

Rudd first became a vegetarian after passing a Californian cattle farm while touring the USA. In an interview with the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), he recalls the putrid smell and the limited space the animals had to live in. "My biggest problem with society now is the mass production and no one even considering all those lives that are being factory farmed for human greed," he says. Named the 'sexiest Australian male vegetarian in 2007' by PETA, Rudd has accepted the lifestyle wholeheartedly and without any second thoughts. "Vegetarianism feels good for my body," he says. "Everyone is entitled to choose what is right for them, but to be honest, I couldn't imagine anything worse than having meat in my system."

As well as taking care of his body, Rudd also advocates the nourishment of spirit. Something that sets his music apart from other folk, reggae and roots artists is his reference and strong ties to Aboriginal lore. He is of Wurundjeri descent and





In-Site
HEAR XAVIER
RUDD TALK TO
PETA ABOUT
BECOMING
VEGETARIAN

frequently sings of reconciliation and connection to the land. "There is much to learn from Aboriginal culture," he says. "Every little thing in creation is considered as equal, and when you actually take time to look around and consider this in your day, it becomes a very powerful meditation. It can be difficult to take in at first, but a great respect for country and culture can only come from this."

"...as spirit guides I write about it. This is a natural flow and I don't feel it will ever dry up."

Song-writing, Rudd tells us, is a direct reflection of his journey. "And it is always a powerful one," he says. "I meet lots of amazing people and visit so many different places, and each person and place has lessons, so there is always lots of material to draw from." This also means that his river of creativity and inspiration seldom ever runs dry. As he encourages us all to be through his music, Rudd is guided strongly by spirit. "And as spirit guides I write about it. This is a natural flow and I don't feel it will ever dry up."

Of his new project with The United Nations, Rudd says it has long been his ambition to bring a group of so many cultures and talents together to make music. "It's been a long-time dream of mine to put a band like this together," he says. "And it is an absolute honour to play with such incredible musicians and humans from so many different cultures around the world." Those who attend Wanderlust festival (wanderlust.com) in Great Lake Taupo, New Zealand (February 4–7), and Threadbo in Australia (February 18–21) will have the opportunity to experience this symbiotic musical venture for themselves. The festival brings together inspirational speakers, yoga pros and wellness warriors together for four amazing days of music, meditation and activities (and let's not forget healthful food).

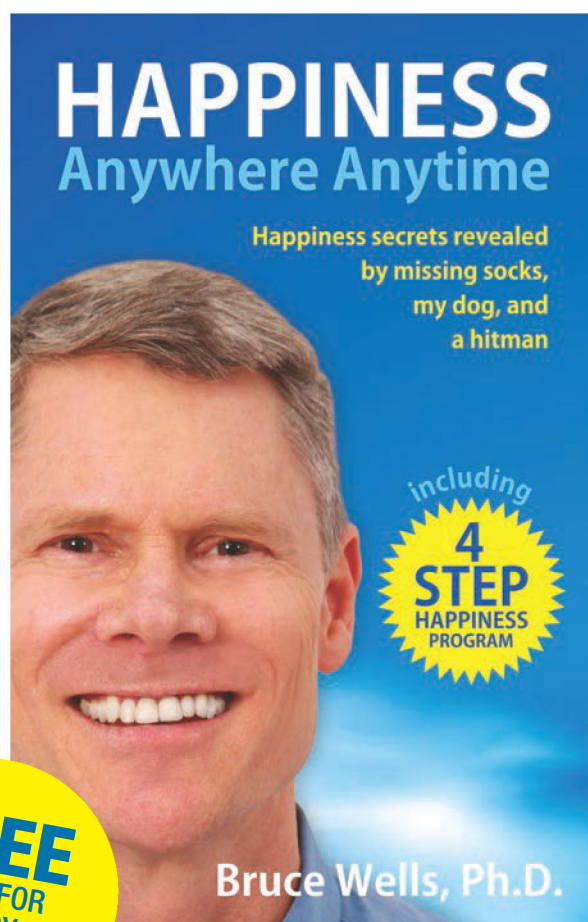
If after all this talk of connection and freedom of spirit you are seeking a way to become more 'one' with the earth, may we suggest removing your shoes? Rudd is seldom seen without bare feet, a custom he believes helps him remain connected, and we are sure will make you feel, above all else, free. "I like to feel where I am at," says Rudd. "I like to feel the energy of the place that I am in. A lot can be felt through the feet." NH

So follow, follow the sun
The direction of the birds
The direction of love
Breathe, breathe in the air
Cherish this moment
Cherish this breath
Tomorrow's a new day for everyone
A brand new moon, brand new sun

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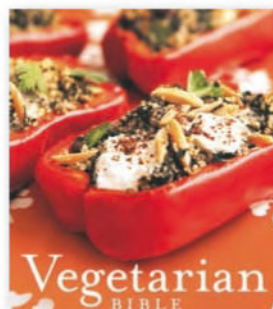
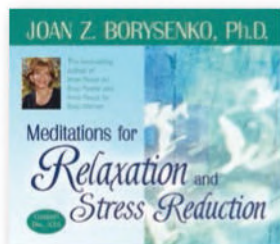
By Jonny Bowden
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Travel to Japan, Italy and Costa Rica, and discover why longevity comes naturally to the people who live there. Author Jonny Bowden explores what he calls the seven pillars of longevity: food, supplements, emotional intelligence, sleep, detoxification and exercise. Through his research and recommendations, you too can eat, sleep and live to feel great, avoid illness and enjoy a long life.

Meditations for Relaxation and Stress Reduction

By Joan Z. Borysenko
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This breath-centered meditation gently guides you through each part of your body, helping you establish contact with the life force within each cell and balance the body's energy. Included is a series of simple meditative stretches and self-massage instructions to restore vitality to body, mind and spirit.



Vegetarian Bible

\$24.95

By Janella Purcell

Love your body with wholesome fare from this multifaceted guide to vegetarian eating. These recipes draw on cultures from around the world and there's a dish to suit every taste and every occasion, from warming winter soups to crisp summer salads, from spicy Asian stir-fries to hearty bean stews. Whether you're a full-time vegetarian or vegan, or someone who just enjoys eating the occasional meal without meat, the *Vegetarian Bible* is for you.

Elixir

By Janella Purcell
\$29.99

Janella Purcell believes that the food we eat affects not only our physical body, but also our mind and spirit. In this book, she shares her expertise on food, health and nutrition and shows you how to bolster your health by using food as medicine. Discover more about healthy ageing, organic produce and how to prevent and treat common complaints with diet and lifestyle – complete with easy-to-prepare recipes that will make you feel fabulous.



Living with Diabetes

Australian Natural Health
\$16.95

For a holistic approach to diabetes management, look no further than *Living with Diabetes*. From the team at Australian Natural Health, this special edition magazine offers insightful and delicious ideas to help you treat, and even reverse, the symptoms of diabetes. From meal plans, indulgent dessert recipes and impressive dinner party ideas, we have your feast needs covered. We have also tracked down exercise, weight loss and natural healing experts to ensure you have the most up-to-date and comprehensive information available. *Living with Diabetes* is the ultimate guide to living with, managing and reversing diabetes, naturally.

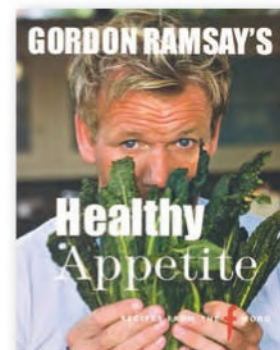
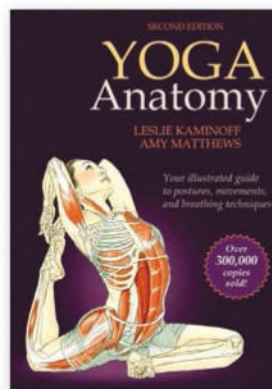


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Yoga Anatomy

By Leslie Kaminoff and Amy Matthews
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Gain a deeper understanding of the structures and principles underlying each movement and of yoga itself with *Yoga Anatomy*. See how specific muscles respond to the movements of the joints and how alterations of a pose can enhance or reduce effectiveness. Whether you are just beginning your journey or have been practising yoga for years, *Yoga Anatomy* will be an invaluable resource – one that allows you to see each movement in an entirely new light.



Healthy Appetite

By Gordon Ramsay
\$49.95

What you are is what you eat – and everyone wants to be healthy. In *Healthy Appetite*, Gordon Ramsay has put together more than 100 dishes that are completely in tune with the way we want to eat today: packed with fresh, vital ingredients and demonstrates healthy cooking methods that guarantee optimum flavour. Find out what his favourite healthy ingredients are and how to use them in your diet.

Living with **Diabetes**

Your Guide to a Healthy Life



From the team at *Australian Natural Health* magazine, this holistic guide is packed with all the information you need to understand and embrace diabetes.

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Chocolate for thought

Whoever it was that said chocolate was bad for you was simply eating the wrong chocolate. We spoke to Emma Jackman about the inspiration behind Conscious Chocolate, a sweet treat with nutritional benefits.



What inspired you to create organic, raw and homemade chocolate?

I wanted to create a chocolate that not only tasted luxurious and decadent but was also healthy and had no dairy or refined sugars. I had a vision that we should be able to buy a raw chocolate that was suitable for everyone, regardless of his or her dietary requirements, so that no one was excluded. I wanted to break the premise that you have to compromise taste to have health or that chocolate can't be healthy.

Tell us a little bit about your chocolates? What is the best thing about your products?

The best thing about my products is that you know the chocolate is hand-made by people who care in a tiny company with ingredients that are truly amazing and include uncompromising, premium superfoods. We are also a totally environmentally friendly company: our foil is part made from chalk, so it is biodegradable and our cartons are fully biocompostable. Plus we have a huge range of flavours, and consumers have the guilt-free pleasure of knowing that you can have both taste and health at once! I also love the texture: a melt-in-your-mouth, truffle-like ganache. This comes using coconut butter.

Why are organic ingredients important to you?

They are important for the confidence in the ingredient and traceability – I don't want to be eating pesticides with my chocolate.

What made you decide to create a chocolate using a sugar alternative such as rice syrup?

I wanted a chocolate without refined sugars due to the spike and the unbalancing caused by refined sugars in terms of glycaemic load and glycaemic index – there was no chocolate on the market offering this at the time.

What is your personal favourite product/flavour, and why?

I love the goji and coconut flavour. It is one of the original flavours and I love the taste combination. I also love the orange because it is quite warming and comforting and has uplifting properties. And my third favourite would have to be the Love Potion No.9 with maca and rose essential oils. It's not everyone's favourite but those who like it are so happy when they taste it.

Do you have any exciting plans for 2016?

Ooh...in terms of business we want to increase our social media presence and continue with new product development to keep our audience trying new flavours. In a personal sense – travel more and join my pleasure of travel and sociability with my business.

Describe the perfect day off...

Wake up, do my yoga practice, drink herbal tea, eat chocolate, play with the children and be silly dressing up or making up some games. Walk the dog (and often the cats) in the woods and go by the lakes. Eat fresh foods and fruit. Lots of laughter. Spending time with family and friends. NH

INSPIRE ME

Emma's top tips for living well in 2016

1. **Eat less and eat healthy** as a gift to yourself! But treat yourself. Eat chocolate and enjoy yourself! And always remember to
2. Be **brave**.
3. **Do exercise of some sort every day** be it yoga or the gym or a run or bouncing on the trampoline with your kids – find what works for you and do it to get the blood flowing and to move your body.
4. Try to **find time for creative and spiritual outlets**, even going for a walk in the nature can do this for you.
5. **Make time for yourself** with a bath, a book. Sleep!
6. Take time to **love and laugh as much as possible** even when busy and with yourself too.
7. **Let go, don't hold on to regrets**, try to move forward and be happy.



conscious

Organic raw chocolate

Lovingly made by hand, Conscious Chocolate is the guilt-free indulgence to spoil your loved ones and yourself all year round!



The Conscious Chocolate love story...

Conscious Chocolate is a love story that started in our kitchen with a wooden spoon and the desire for a chocolate that is healthy as well as heavenly.

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We promise to use only ethically sourced, raw, organic, premium ingredients.

Each bar is still lovingly made by hand, with every recipe being a love story in itself.

Enjoy! Emma

Available at all good health food stores & independent supermarkets

www.consciouschocolate.com



Conscious Chocolates



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Organic



Gluten free



Dairy Free



Raw



Vegan



Barnes Naturals Organic Unfiltered Apple Cider Vinegar is made with pure ingredients and no artificial colours or flavours. Apple cider vinegar has been consumed for healing, cleansing and energising, and Barnes' entire range contains 'the mother' enzyme for optimal nutrition. Try the honey version for the extra sweetness of organic Australian honey. **RRP \$6.99**, barnesnaturals.com.au

Melrose Kiwi Vinegar is a highly nutritious fruit vinegar made from the delicious green juices of kiwifruit, and contains the 'mother' enzyme. A natural digestive that can be taken before meals, it can also be added to salads as a delicious dressing. Available in cinnamon and ginger varieties. **RRP \$9.95**, www.melrosehealth.com.au



Manuka Super Traveller can protect you from airborne viruses and bacteria while travelling. Made with clove oil, lemon, eucalyptus, lavender and cinnamon, simply place a few drops onto your hand and breathe in the antiviral essential oil vapours. Travel well, stay well and be well. **RRP \$27.95**, manukahoneybalm.com



Lotus Agar Agar is a vegetarian substitute for gelatine obtained from algae. It can be used in desserts or to thicken soups and sauces. Agar Agar is a perfect vegan alternative for cooking and is gluten free, fructose free, dairy free and nut free. **RRP \$17.99**, lotuspantry.com.au



Real Good Food Organic Energy SuperFood Blends is a raw powder containing vital nutrients to give you energy throughout the day. Made with premium ingredients such as organic maca and amaranth, simply add to your smoothie, juice or water. The SuperFood Blends is certified organic, non-GMO and dairy free and is blended and packed in Melbourne, Australia. **RRP \$19.99**, realgoodfood.com.au

Sven's Island Miracle Manuka™ is a gorgeous-smelling, all-purpose antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial ointment that has been used by the native people of New Zealand for centuries. It contains organic chamomile and calendula, as well as manuka and kanuka oil, which provide relief from symptoms of eczema and psoriasis. Naturally high levels of cytophyllactic cell regeneration properties in this balm also help to soothe and relieve dry, cracked skin, grazes, minor cuts and burns. This is a must-have in your medicine cabinet. **RRP \$27.95**, svensisland.com



Yaeyama Pacifica Chlorella is a green superfood that can help you naturally cleanse, detox and nourish your body. Used by professionals worldwide to help remove heavy metals such as mercury and cadmium, Yaeyama Pacifica Chlorella has been recognised for over 40 years as the number-one chlorella supplement for its unique Jet-Spray Cell Wall Technology that opens the cell wall for a high 82 per cent digestibility, greater nutritional potency, purity and mild taste. Available at leading health food stores throughout Australia. **RRP \$18.95** for 100 tablets, greennutritionals.com.au



Amazonia Raw Protein Isolate in Cacao and Coconut is a delicious raw, prebiotic, dairy-free protein with premium bioavailability. Enhanced with live digestive enzymes and prebiotics to support digestive balance and assist with absorption, this unique protein is designed to be easy on the gut. A blend of 70 per cent golden pea and 30 per cent brown rice, Raw has been specifically formulated to provide an optimal, complete amino-acid complex, perfect for vegans and anyone who needs to get more protein in their day. **RRP \$46.95**, amazonia.com.au

Wild Thing Paleo bars will help you embrace your inner wild thing. They're raw, vegan, gluten-free and organic snack bars that are packed full of nutrient-dense ingredients and the odd superfood or two. Wild Thing bars are perfect for outdoor adventures, workout snacks and busy-day nutrition. Choose from four wild flavours including Coconut & Chia and Cacao & Almond. **RRP \$3.25**, organicdoor.com.au



The **Kuvings Whole Slow Juicer** is the first cold-press juicer that juices whole fruit and vegetables and is stylish, quiet and easy to clean. Nominated by *Choice* as the number-one cold-press juicer, the Kuvings Whole Slow Juicer yields more nutrients and enzymes for a healthy juice. For more information and to see the new releases call 02 97980586 or visit kuvings.net.au



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